COMIXSCENE

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ALL HORROR ISSUE!

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EDITORIAL

Take a good look around and you'll have to agree with us—horror comics are here to stay! The same trend that surfaced in the 50's and 60's has manifested itself again—this time more firmly entrenched in all popular media than ever.

Look around! Hardly a week goes by that a handful of TV starlets aren't menaced by something lurking just out of reach, something in the dark, something from the unknown. Witchcraft, astrology, satanism, the supernatural all have a fling at scaring the yell out of us.

Paperback racks are overcrowded with volumes of unexplained happenings, haunted houses, horror and fantasy pulp reprints, and tons of Gothic romance novels. The comics are firmly upholding their end of the media too.

Heroes that used to carry star-spangled shields are being replaced by non-heroes who have claws instead of fingernails, fur instead of face masks, batwings instead of cloaks. It's the year of the Demons, the Werewolves, the Frankensteins, the Swamp Things, the Draculas.

With all this in mind, the third issue of *COMIXSCENE* is dedicated to exploiting the current monster madness. This issue, beginning with the front page reproduction of Marvel's second cover for their new horror title, *Dracula Lives*, we are pleased to present a plentitude of pulse-stopping pictures and prose, plus a pinch of a philosophy on what it's all about.

Gary Brown neatly dissects the current monster/hero trend, while new *COMIXSCENE* staffer, Tom Greeniones digs deep to uncover an interesting hypothesis on the horror comics of the 50's. Bob Weinberg lays open the history of the fabulous fear pulps of yesterday. All this plus a shivery sampling of horror comics from out of the dark past.

Our contribution is in the form of a short picture story, complete on a single page. This brief terror tale is a study of a pathological biology professor and his obsession with frogs—it's the kind of thing that's been told before, in a dozen different ways.

We can imagine the same story told by Stan Lee—its title: Frogg, Son of Redip. In it, the biology prof spends a lifetime dissecting frogs in the lab. In the end, an enormous, slithery tongue zips the startled teacher out of the panel. The look on his face shows he's repented—but too late.

Had Gardner Fox written the tale, the professor would have destroyed the frog colony but only after discovering that they were really aliens from another galaxy, bent on conquering the earth. The professor decides never to mention it because no one would believe his story.

As an EC yarn, the biologist would have taken sadistic satisfaction in capturing and dissecting the specimens. One day he does not appear in the laboratory and his students organize a search party for him in the local swamp. They find him on a giant lily pad, carefully slashed into pieces as though for the purpose of examination. Choke! Good Lord!!

The *Mad* version would have the old prof going into the swamp one more time and slipping on a frog, while the Myron Fass interpretation would show the biologist stomping on frogs by the dozens. The shot is drawn in a close-up of the underside of the shoe.

In the Denny O'Neil version, the professor would eventually wipe out the frog population, upsetting the balance of ecology in the swamp, thereby creating an organic plague which dooms mankind. In the final panel, a lone tadpole is seen looking toward the stars. When will man ever learn?

With all due respect to the above gentlemen, our own version will be found somewhere inside.

While we're on the subject, let's take a moment to discuss the technique of horror in visual storytelling. As I've often stated, I learned a great deal about the mechanics of dramatic pictorialization from the medium of film. The fundamental elements of construction, of course, apply to every kind of genre, be it western, crime, mainstream, action, comedy, or horror.

Yet it seems that few of the horror tales being published today make use of those basics. Perhaps I can make my point best by giving an example of what I mean. Remember *I was a Teenage Werewolf*—a horror film that became a comedy as soon as we saw Mike Landon's furry face in close-up?

Had the producers of that film wished to evoke real horror from the audience, they would first have to understand that true fear and terror exists in the mind—and that it almost always dissipates when visualized.

A perfect example is Hitchcock's *Psycho*, one of the scariest movies ever made. Little violence, almost no blood, yet the suspense kept you on the edge of your seat. The film's impact was shattering!

It was also tasteful.

No animated cadavers. No dismembered corpses. No bloody entrails. Still it left the viewer stunned because it built the aspect of fear in the mind, not on the screen.

It can be done in comics, but it won't be easy!

I'm not saying that shock scenes don't have their value, they do. Yet, most of the material on the stands now don't use violence and gore as a devastating accent, they use it as a shallow foundation upon which to build their stories, exploiting instead of developing.

Horror can be presented as tastefully as any other subject—but, it requires thought and ingenuity. Too many writers and artists are inclined to take the easy way out, filling their pages with bloody pictures and cheap dramatics. Too many comic readers are accepting this trash instead of rejecting it for what it is. You are the buying public, you have the last word.

If comics are ever to grow up, the publishers *and* the readers must develop a sense of responsibility.

Right?

Right!

A few more things before we close: Have you noticed the exceptional coloring of DC's comic covers lately—without a doubt the very best to be seen on the stands in years. Our hat's off to the man with the most educated sense of color in the business—Jack Adler. We should all take a lesson from him!

As you read in the last issue of COMIXSCENE, the FOOM club is underway, and getting it all together in the last few months has raised hell with the Supergraphics schedule. PLEASE TAKE NOTE: *The Mike Hinge Experience* will be published in about a month and mailed immediately. *The Encyclopedia of Super Heroes* is still in production without a publishing date set at the moment. We expected it to go to press at the beginning of the year, but FOOM came up. We had to decide to do either one or the other at the time.

By postponing the *Encyclopedias*, I am able to do both jobs. I've started on the heroes and will keep on top of them until the books are completed. You know we'll come through with a quality product. DO NOT WRITE ASKING ABOUT THE BOOKS! *COMIXSCENE* will keep you posted on their progress. In the meantime, you'll enjoy the FOOM magazine and the rest of the Marvel membership kit.

A word about subscriptions: If some of you missed the second issue, it was because we received your subscription AFTER the issue was mailed out. We begin all subs with the issue in production—we cannot start with the first issue! To Gary Brown's *COMIC COMMENTS* subscribers: We are honoring those subscriptions on a basis of 1 for 2. Those who had 4 issues due will get 2 issues of *COMIXSCENE*, etc. Odd issue subs get the extra *COMIXSCENE* anyway, OK?

A personal note of thanks to Mark Collins for gifting us with the world's first actual Motherbox. Mark took first prize at the 1972 Comic Art Convention costume contest for his dynamic portrayal of the one and only Mr. Miracle. Better believe it, Mark knocked the audience out as he escaped from a pair of steel manacles while a billowing mist of white smoke exploded from beneath his satin cloak. Right on, my man!

We received a couple of undergrounds in the mail a few weeks ago that impressed us quite a bit. John Thompson, an artist with a list of accomplishments as long as your arm, was kind enough to send along his latest two offerings, *Eternal Tales* and *Tales From The Sphinx*.

In both books, Thompson juggles complex design, imaginative perspectives, and mind-expanding ideas with dazzling stylistic skill, always in perfect control of his subject matter. Conceptually, he stands head and shoulders above most underground contributors. But don't take our word for it, sample Thompson's work and see for yourself. *Eternal Tales*, a handsome, oversize comic printed on heavy offset stock, is available for $1.00 from Terry Stroud, 3060 Descending Drive, Hacienda Heights, Calif. 91745. *Tales From The Sphinx*, in regular underground size, can be had for .50 plus .15 postage from Kitchen Sink Enterprises, PO Box 5699, Milwaukee, Wis. 53211.

We've been discussing the thought lately of adding a sister publication to *COMIXSCENE*, one which would encompass the entire media field—films, paperbacks, magazines, underground, hardbound books, TV, records, and comics. This projected periodical (which would probably fall between issues of *COMIXSCENE*) would cover extensively the upcoming news and material in all the above areas, focusing primarily on the aspects which would be of special interest to those who dig fantasy, adventure, and action.

Would you be interested in subscribing to such a publication? How about some ideas on what to feature—a science fiction section, one on westerns or crime or gothic books, features on those difficult to obtain European comics, reviews of art books, new TV series? You tell us! Your response will bring it to life or kill the idea! How about it?

Next issue, *COMIXSCENE* will publish my anti-drug comic, *The BLOCK*, in its entirity. Those of you who asked where they could locate it, will finally have the chance to see the story. The following issue of *COMIXSCENE* will be a super-special DOUBLE ISSUE, packed with pages of exciting graphics and color. It's theme—we'll keep you guessing until next issue.

Let us know your opinions and ideas about *COMIXSCENE*. We promised the best and we meant it.

Until next time then, take care.

STERANKO

This issue is dedicated to
BILL GAINES
without whom there
would be no EC

FUTURE HISTORIES OF COMICS PLANNED

Since the publication of Volume 2 of the series, a realistic projection has been made encompassing the remaining four volumes. Charles Biro will be the man in the spotlight in Volume 3, tentatively scheduled for publication in 1973. In a chapter entitled THE BIRO BOYS, the highly talented artist/writer will be studied in detail, as will his myriad creations like Daredevil, Crimebuster, Iron Jaw, Steel Sterling and many others.

THE KID PLAYERS will receive another treatment in the third volume as Steranko revises and expands this chapter from Volume 1, adding to the exploits of the Little Wise Guys and others.

The female sex will be explored in the chapter called THE LEADING LADIES. Sheena, The Black Cat, The Blonde Phantom and others will be studied in this section devoted to the comics' liberated women.

Science fiction in the comics will be discussed in THE SCI-FI MEN. The Shadow, The Green Hornet, The Black Terror, and their crime-fighting compatriots are all studied in THE MAGNIFICENT UNDER-STUDIES. *A score of miscellaneous super heroes, THE HEROIC EXTRAS are given their credit in this book.* The remaining Golden Age characters are featured in the self-explanatory chapter, THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE AWFUL. All the publishers and personnel not covered in Volumes 1 and 2 will be accurately described in Volume 3. Street and Smith, Fiction House, Harvey, Holyoke and many more are here, along with the important biographics of Biro, Powell, Rico, Novick, Wolverton, Nordling and dozens of others. Capping off this trilogy of Golden Age history will be a personal, retrospective and nostalgic afterword on THE END OF THE GOLDEN AGE.

With the fourth volume, *The Steranko History of Comics* bids farewell to the 40's and the first Golden Age of comics with a jam-packed dissertation of the Fabulous 50's. THE CRIME ERA kicks off this book with the memorable titles, *Crime Does Not Pay* and *Crime and Punishment* in the vanguard.

The memorable E. C. AGE is also analyzed here as are its spectacular artists and writers: Gaines, Feldstein, Wood, Kurtzman, Williamson and Davis, to mention only a few.

The 50's WESTERNS are explored next. Alex Toth, Joe Maneely and Dick Ayers are featured prominently in this chapter. THE MISCELLANEOUS COMICS: Hot Rod, Love, Pirate, Movie Star and Jungle Books are next catalogued, their very volume and diversity making them worthy of historic mention.

Newsstands teemed with HORROR COMICS in the 50's—all receive recognition in another enlightening chapter.

Joe Kubert is the star of the 50's volume, and a special chapter on KUBERT'S COMICS is his stage. Sgt. Rock, Tor, The Viking Prince and many, many others attempt to record the virtuosity of one of comics' finest artists.

THE COMING OF THE HEROES deals with the relatively unimportant yet nevertheless present superheroes of the 50's like Captain 3-D, The Avenger and Jet Powers. THE SECOND GOLDEN AGE leads into the Sensational 60's by way of National and their revivals of the Flash, Green Lantern, Batman, Hawkman and all the rest.

Stan Lee stars in the fifth volume of the series, represented by his magnum opus, THE FANTASTIC FOUR, and carries an entire chapter, based on the world's greatest comic. THE MARVEL AGE is explored next with the origins of Spiderman, Hulk and Iron Man detailed. The Avengers, X-Men and others are all part of another chapter, as are all the greats who have told their tales: Buscema, Colan, Ditko, Thomas and of course Stan Lee.

Harvey, Charlton, Tower and all the smaller companies share the next chapter called THE BACK-SEAT SUPER HEROES. Fitting in as part of this book will be the immortal Goo-Gam and Rombuu of the Kirby MONSTER BOOKS that immediately preceded the Marvel Age.

NATIONAL COMICS commands *their own chapter which features Deadman, The Geek, Hawk and Dove, Bat Lash,* and dozens more. The works of Carmine Infantino, Gil Kane, Curt Swan, Murphy Anderson, Julie Schwartz, and others will receive recognized attention.

SUPERHERO 70'S is the title of a cumulative chapter dealing with the recent Kirby books, the ERB acquisitions and The Green Lantern/Green Arrow titles.

STERANKO, himself a part of the 60's comic scene, will undertake an autobiographical chapter, giving a penetrating behind-the-scenes look at Nick Fury, Captain America. Scorpio and the workings of SHIELD.

The sixth and last volume of the HISTORY OF COMICS is to be an amalgam of every subject and title bypassed in the previous volumes. Funny Animals, Archie, Mad, Dell, Gold Key, Disney, Classic Comics, Trump, Annie Fanny and countless others are placed in perspective and analyzed to complete the projected 600,000 word chronology of comics.

This, then, is a tentative outline of the HISTORY OF COMICS' future. If, as in the past, division of a book or books is necessary for proper clarification of a given subject, such division will be made. Steranko has promised the definitive series with nothing less than perfection as his goal.

The size, format and price of the HISTORY OF COMICS should remain stable at $5.00 per volume. The only increase forseen is one of quality.

COMIC WANT LIST!

I need the following material for research in fine to mint condition. If you have any of these books, let me know their condition and price.

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HEADLINE 37, 40-43, 46-48

MY DATE 1, 2, 5, 6

ALL-AMERICAN WESTERN 101, 104, 113-115

BLACK RIDER 13, 15-20, 22, 28-30

TEXAS KID 3, 4, 6, 8, 9

GHOST RIDER 3, 9, 11, 13, 15

CIRCUS 1, 2

MORE FUN 1, 2, 7, 8

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Lone Ranger Western Town

I'm also looking for pulps by the boxfull – crime, western, love, adventure, misc. Tell me what you have and I'll make an offer!

STERANKO

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- ☐ Encyclopedia of Heroes - Vol. 3 $3.00 plus .25 postage
- ☐ All three of the above books $7.50 — we pay postage
- ☐ History of Comics - Vol. 1 $3.00 plus .25 postage
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HORROR ON THE NEWSTAND

Those who enjoy pasting labels on things are in their glory when they can classify a whole year or era as being influenced by one particular trend. It is either the Age of Aquarius of the year of Jesus or an era of terror and violence. The first thing one learns about these all-encompassing labels, however, is that they are almost totally business oriented. What sells is deemed popular, and what is popular is pushed to sell. Pushed, indeed, to the limit.

The horror story has comic books by the ear, however tattered that ear may be after the parade of wide-eyed readers finish clutching the periodical in outright fear. A fear initiated by the O'Henry type of surprise ending or a thing of scales, arms, foot-long tendrils and hair creeping through the last few panels of a story. A fear that has become so cliched that one wonders if comic

books have not worked themselves into an even deeper sameness than ever before.

One would have to say there is a fine line between the ghost or horror story and the actual monster tale. Plot-wise these two are certainly interchangable, with the difference being in how the element of horror is achieved. A story consisting of a giant monster chasing someone is considerably different from a well-structured mysterious sort of tale, although they both can arrive at the same result, merely depending on who is reading, watching or listening. Horror, believe it or not, offers various levels of sophistication in any medium in which it is featured.

The ghost or horror or monster comics can be traced back to the early 1940's if necessary, but it is the current renaissance that is the most interesting. Rather than begin in 1963, or bicker over which book started the horror trend, *Amazing Adult Fantasy* or *Ghostly Tales*, let us overview the curious hodgepodge of the current horror fare.

The real difference, it seems, does not so much lie with the various treatments given by individual companies, but with the obvious gap between the 'overground' and 'underground' comics. The best description of the two approaches to horror comic books comes from Richard Corben, a writer-artist who has worked in both areas of the medium.

"There are all kinds of differences between the regular comics and underground comics," states Corben. "The first underground horror books were tongue-in-cheek parodies of the old E.C.s. Even now, most of the stories have a humorous intent. The most obvious differences to the casual observer are that the undergrounds are mostly black and white, the artwork is sometimes amateurish, and there is an emphasis on everything that is forbidden to the regular comics. The underground stories are

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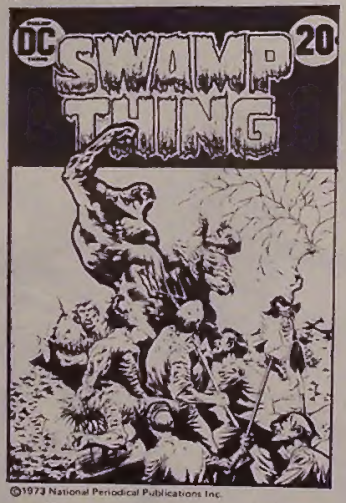

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usually creations of an individual, and can be good or bad, but are usually uneven. The overgrounds are assembly line efforts, and are not good or bad, but always even."

The assembly-line approach can be easily detected in a great number of the regular horror comic books. What appears to be successful for one company is usually copied to some extent by one of the competitors. This is not to say that there is no creativity whatsoever in this sort of system—there certainly is—but in the attempt to produce a salient item, the major goal is too often one of creating something someone else wants, rather than what the writer or artist would like to do.

That can be best seen in the Heap, Man-Thing, Swamp Thing triangle. One begat the other in a seesaw battle that extends into the early comics, the pulps, and even as far back as the 19th Century. The theme of an essentially innocent man being trapped in a body that repulses everyone and anyone, has been used by writers like Mary Shelley, Gaston Leroux, Victor Hugo and perhaps others who probably did not even realize they were using it. It is not a case of who did it first in the comics, but rather that they do it well enough to merit the continued publication of the series.

The Swamp Thing possibly merits closer attention, because it has managed to stick with the same writer and artist for more than six months. The Berni Wrightson-Len Wein approach may not be anymore out of the ordinary than the other teams on similar characters, but the fact that they have the opportunity to develop a direction for the strip, and then carry that idea forth, gives their effort a slight edge. Dealing with a character who is merely a carbon copy of a carbon copy presents problems for the writer and artist, as well as not allowing for the excite-

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ment that would generally accompany another project.

Horror comics usually sell because they are horror comics. The emphasis on the type of writing and artwork is as important in its own way as it would be for any other comic, but a well-known name in the horror comic can easily be translated into other terms if need be.

Dracula and vampires in general can easily go hand-in-hand, as does Frankenstein and any sort of animated monster. The werewolf concept especially can be utilized in a number of different situations, as demonstrated by Marvel's *Werewolf By Night*. In fact, Marvel's trilogy of well-known characters present an interesting use of time in adapting the stories to comic book form.

The *Frankenstein* book is done as true to the original as possible (least ways, for comics), and has proven to be interesting. Mike Ploog's style has fit the mood of the novel very well, and indeed accompanies the Frankenstein saga much better than the dreary-eyed, dark version with which many people identify the character. Frankenstein is excellent social commentary, and deep down inside, a very optimistic story, and a monster tale third. Gary Friedrich's writing is balanced enough to compare favorably with the original, yet does not allow the narrative form to override the illustrations and dominate the book.

Werewolf By Night is an up-dated version of the werewolf legend, and has quickly cornered itself into using one of two basic plots; the werewolf is pursued or the werewolf lends a helping hand. It gets tiresome after several issues, and the recurring circus atmosphere does not lend itself to any greater variety in locale. The attempt to have a frustrated, doubting hero fits the lycanthropic dilemma well, but is no longer a novel approach in comics, and tends to suffer even more under the Marvel

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banner, where so many similar hero problems dwell. *Werewolf By Night* and Ploog's art allow for a colorful book, possibly the best-colored comic around today, yet the character is slowly becoming a whiter shade of pale.

Of all the new horror books, perhaps the finest is the Marvel adaptation of the Dracula character. It is a well-drawn series, as Gene Colan's style seems to blend perfectly with the sort of atmosphere needed for a popular vampire. Colan also draws some of the most convincing fog and mist scenes in all of comicdom, if such specifics interest you. But the major success of the book is in the scripting by Gerry Conway, Gardener Fox, and Marv Wolfman. Dracula is not overplayed, but is

featured as a major character in a minor way. The Dracula legend has always been based more on his presence, than any actual violence he displayed. The Marvel writers and editors have realized this, thus allowing the atmosphere of the book to center around Dracula, but not be totally dependant on him. It will be interesting to compare the reaction to the *Dracula* comic book, with the rather liberal handling and placing of the black and white magazine, *Dracula Lives!*

While Marvel has been concerned with characters thrown into ghostly or horror situations, National has stuck primarily to the straight, short story approach. In their reincarnation, *House of Mystery* and *House of Secrets* produced an excellent bal-

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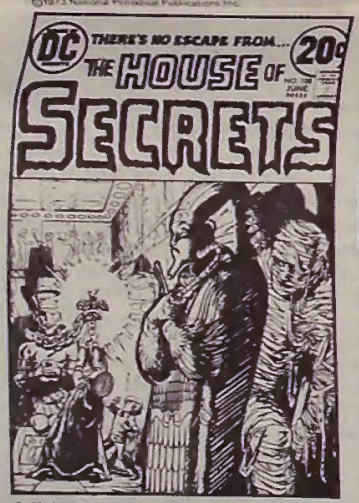

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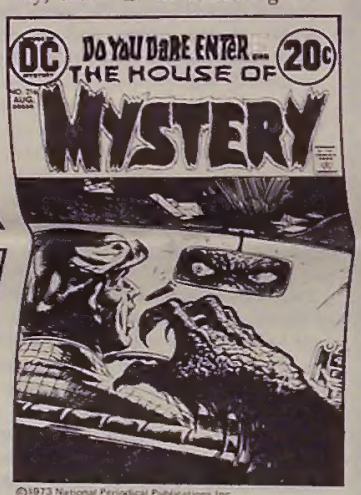
ance of writers and artists. Under the editorship of Joe Orlando and Dick Giordano, the books took on a sort of E.C. look in both visuals and type of subject matter. The use of hosts and hostesses is practiced in both "*House*" books, as well as most of the newer mystery titles.

The whole atmosphere in the DC books was different, each editor, whether Orlando, Giordano, Boltinoff or Schwartz, kept blending each issue into one whole book, rather than three or four unrelated horror stories. The hosts helped to achieve this, but themes were also utilized in trying the stories together. *Witching Hour* once even tried a different theme each issue, jumping from ghosts to monsters to science fiction and so forth. The delight of the DC books, however, was that they did supply the reader with a fine array of artists and writers. The Boltinoff books, *Witching Hour, Unexpected* and *Ghosts,* were successful enough to be boosted to a monthly schedule in a short period of time.

As time developed, and National sent more of their art assignments to the Phillipines, the books continued to feature fine art and writing but began to gain the sort of predictability that many of the horror books from the 1950's maintained. Horror-wise, both Marvel and National have stuck to their particular formulas for creating stories, with DC sticking to shorter stories, while Marvel is leaning more toward longer tales and reprints.

If there is any actual competition of an artistic level, it certainly belongs with the undergrounds and regular comics, rather than between the major companies. Titles such as *Fantagor, Skull, Slow Death* and *Fever Dreams* have moved from being published as a lark, to being serious attempts at writing and drawing realistic and horror comics. With *Skull* and *Slow Death* leading the way, there is an increasing effort



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to achieve success and originality—sometimes at any cost. "The basic limitations of comic book creation are common to both establishment and underground comics," advises Corben. "I'd say, they are to tell a story well. I'm afraid there is a tendency in the undergrounds to have lots of drugs, radical politics, cussing, physical abnormalities, violence and sex merely because these things are conspicuously absent in regular comics. Let's face it, they are a part of real life. I believe the person who writes or draws comics for adults should be free to use any subject that may interest him. It has been my experience in the underground comics, that publishers do *not* obligate the cartoonists to include sex or the grotesque. They only state the physical limitations (page count) and the general theme (horror, science fiction, dream fantasy, etc.). So if there is a level of eroticism, nudity or bizzare characters in my strips, it is because I feel it is necessary to tell the story honestly."

All publishers are interested in selling copies of their magazines in order to continue in business, and will go along with almost any trend to do so. It is the simple law of survival, and applies to both overground comics as well as the undergrounds. It is interesting to note that both types of books have gone to the practice of adapting stories into graphic form. H.P. Lovecraft, Ray Bradbury, Robert E. Howard and a host of other writers have been used in almost any method you would care to mention, as a literary aid, rather than merely an economic move. For instance, there will be an underground comic out this fall called *The Bradbury Chronicles,* written by Meade Frierson and drawn by Steve Fabian. This 32-page underground comic will feature adaptations of Bradbury's "And The Moon Be Still As Bright" and "Leviathan

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SUPERNATURAL THRILLERS
20¢ 5
FEATURING
THE LIVING MUMMY
HE WAITED THREE THOUSAND YEARS TO WREAK THE REVENGE OF THE UNLIVING!
ONE OF THE GREATEST FEAR-FESTS OF ALL TIME!
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99." In a like manner, Lovecraft, Howard and others have had stories and entire books such as *Skull* 5, dedicated to adapting their stories.

The actual production methods of the underground books differs from regular comics in that the deadlines are not always as strict. "There is no standard way of doing things in the underground comix," says Corben. "It's all very loose and sometimes confusing. In the regular series books like *Skull* or *Slow Death,* the editor will commission strips to fill an issue. Some books are done without a publisher's commitment. This can be advantageous to cartoonists in the Bay Area where the largest undergound publishers are clustered. He can show his book to them all, and take the best deal offered. Some books were even fanzines first, before they were comix. *Anomaly* and *Fantagor* are good examples of this situation."

"The payment deals vary from publisher to publisher," he continues: "Some will pay for a book in advance, for the first printing, while others pay only as the book is being sold. The money amounts are almost always proportional to the sales. The artist/writer share maybe $25 per page for 20,000 books. But if it is a popular book, and sells in the 100,000 to 200,000 range, as have the Crumb and Shelton books, the page rate would be $125 to $250."

Corben, one of the top underground artists, has done a number of new books for 1973 release, including *Fantagor* 4 and 5 *Grim Wit* 2. *Fantagor* will continue to be in full color, with Corben doing all the separations himself. "My favorite of all my work is still Rowlf," Richard comments, "which is kind of ironic. It gets good reviews and wins awards, but is *not* a good seller, having only recently gone into its second printing."

Corben's treatment of the graphic media has attracted the attention of fans and professionals around the world. His work in black and white magazines, fanzines and the undergrounds has always presented different and unusual situations in varied visual techniques. At the 1972 Comic Art Convention, artist Alex Toth mentioned he admired Corben because "the guy gives himself difficult tasks to complete and almost always manages to pull them off."

"I enjoy my work most," Corben admitted, "when a book is completed and published, so I can contemplate it at leisure. I like it when I think I've done something good. I'm miserable when I find something I might have improved upon. My literary friends take great glee in pointing out all my errors in grammar and spelling."

The reasons horror comics have made their way back to the top of the market are many and varied. Those writers and artists and even companies who are able to bend with the wind and change from one trend to another, are the ones who will continue to be around when the tastes change once again. It was the demand for more ghost and horror books that made publishers press to have the Comics Code changed. It is not that horror comix offer greater latitude for sex, drugs and other underground traits, but merely that they have been selling, that continues their existance. The comics industry as a whole is capable of producing better comics and stories nowadays, therefore allowing the sophistication level of the medium to rise a bit from former efforts.

People scare just as easily as they did in the 50's or 40's or 30's, regardless of how violent experts claim our society has become. Wrap yourself up in a Lovecraft story or a Corben tale at the stroke of midnight some rainy evening, and see if you do not cringe a time or two. Besides, everyone wants to be scared at one time or another—don't you?

Gary Brown

February 27, 1973

Today, death took Bill Everett, the man comic fans around the world knew as the creator of Prince Namor, the legendary Sub-Mariner.

Everett was hospitalized recently from a massive heart attack that interrupted a long and ambitious career in the world of comics. William Blake Everett was born in Cambridge, Mass. on May 18, 1917. His talent for art materialized early and after high school, Bill enrolled in the Vesper George School of Art. Popular magazine artists like Dean Cornwall, Mead Schaffer, and Floyd Davis were influences in Everett's youthful approach.

During the next several years, Everett worked at a series of jobs which exploited his artistic sensibilities, but the success was too much for him. "I was too cocky," he admitted candidly. "I was fired!"

He searched for work in New York until the point of starvation when a friend introduced him to comics. He started the following week, writing, pencilling, and inking a strip called Skyrocket Steele at $2.00 a page. Then came Amazing Man and Dirk the Demon.

But the character that was destined to bring Everett his immortality was the undersea avenger he named the Sub-Mariner. Like Superman, Captain America, and Batman, Everett's monarch of the deeps became an overnight sensation in the dawning Golden Age of Super Heroes.

Why?

He wore no flashy cape, had no field of stars and stripes, not even a gimmicky face mask. Yet he succeeded as one of the era's most memorable concepts. Everett's emphasis was on character instead of costume. He detoured the usual pledge to aid mankind and the super-goodness routine.

Instead, Everett did an astonishing about face. He created an avenging son who swore he would never rest until he wiped the surface men from the face of the earth.

Everett himself was every bit the iconoclast as his most famous creation. While most of his contemporaries were swiping the works of Caniff, Raymond, or Foster, Bill charted his own course. He once told me, "I didn't want to swipe from anybody; it had to come from me. It wasn't the best, but it was all Everett!"

The Sub-Mariner epic has since become a classic in the truest sense of the word. Namor's fire vs. water conflict with the Human Torch in the pages of *Marvel Mystery* are the most memorable in comic history.

In the meantime, the Everett touch embellished a host of other strips such as The Chameleon, Bulls-Eye Bill, Music Master, Phantasmo, Hydroman, and The Fin ("Because he wore one on his head, of all places," Everett joked).

You could almost hear Namor speaking when Everett summed up his relationship with Timely in the 40's, "Both Arthur (Goodman) and Stan Lee were just kids then, and gave us considerable trouble. But we gave them trouble too!"

When Everett returned home in 1944 from a tour of duty in the service, he married Gwen Randall, moved to Nebraska, and returned to the Sub-Mariner strip, in addition to Namora and Venus. After the comics purge of the 50's, he drew for humor titles like *Loco*, *Cracked* and *Snafu*, in addition to a score of mystery books for Atlas. He dropped out of the business in the late 50's to become Planning Director for Rust Craft Greeting Cards in Dedham, Mass.

Personal problems and ill health plagued Everett during the last ten years of his life. But he always seemed to bounce back stronger than ever. In the 60's, he took advertising assignments, worked in TV animation as a storyboard man, and turned out books like *Pussycat*.

His comic book style continued to improve as the years went by. Bill and I frequently discussed new techniques and approaches to the form. He often drew and painted just for personal pleasure—and the work was outstanding. Bill, as always, remained a fashionable dresser, a quick wit, and a charmingly rebellious personality. It showed in his work and in his manner.

Stan Lee and I were speaking on the phone when we heard about Bill. His death had come unexpectedly.

The words which inspired Everett to create a comic legend might serve well to eulogize his passing. From Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*:

The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright,
and on the right
Went down into the sea.

STERANKO

REVIEWS

CHEAP THRILLS: An informal history of the pulp magazine
Ron Goulart
Arlington House $7.95

The pulps were a form of mass entertainment and literature for a period of about 30 years, during which they enjoyed a popularity comparable to that of the paperback today. Ron Goulart, a highly-honored and well-known science fiction writer and historian, has undertaken to present a general overview of this extinct literary form.

It would be impossible to produce a definitive history of the pulps within the pages of a single book and Goulart, who is a pulp fan, realizes this and prefaces his book with a qualifying statement to that effect. What the author does give us is a semi-detailed breakdown of the myriad facets of the bloody pulps and their beginnings.

Goulart takes his readers back to the days of the dime novels when Frank A. Munsey pioneered the pulp format of thick, ragged paper and colorful enamel covers. He traces the genisis of the pulps, and covers every major point in chapters dealing specifically with the early diversified titles, the high-action adventure books, the Shadow, the masked detectives, Doc Savage, the special/secret agents, the hard-boiled detectives, the westerns, Tarzan and his barbaric compatriots, science fiction, and the multitudinous miscellany. *Each chapter is full of trivia and obscure facts.*

The final chapter is primarily one given over to the reminiscing of the past by such pulp stalwarts as Richard Wormser, Robert Sydney Bowen, Fredric C. Davis, Ken Crossen and others.

Throughout the book, Goulart's writing is alive and reflects his interest in the subject. A great deal of research by Goulart is obvious, due to the many allusions to his personal communications with the writers, artists and editors he mentions. The thousands of facts and statistics involved are handled in a manner that is far from uninspired.

Within the 192 pages of this book, Ron Goulart presents a crisp, analytical and informative outline of the history of pulps. The only drawback that this volume may have is the limited and somewhat undistinguished choice of cover and interior illustrations presented, but then again, the idea of a pulp book without illustrations of any kind is unthinkable.

Cheap Thrills is a book written by a pulp fan for pulp fans. The approach and amount of work lavished on this old and forgotten subject clearly reflects Goulart's affection for the pulps. The book stands out as one of those concise essays that every pulp fan will want for ready reference. Ace paperbacks has already bought the rights so that soon, every collector or fan can be a pulp expert.

Ken Bruzenak

The Mad World of William M. Gaines
by Frank Jacobs
Lyle Stuart, Inc. $7.95

An unknown schoolyard philosopher once said that you know you have made it when you are deemed a Christ figure or someone writes your biography. No one has dared to pin the first rap on William Gaines yet, but Frank Jacobs has taken the second thought and put together the busy, funny, successful and weird bits of Gaines' life into book form. *The Mad World of William M. Gaines* is thankfully a study of the man rather than a history of his creations.

As publisher of E.C. Comics, Gaines has managed to hit the highs and lows of life with a most respectable inconsistancy. Beginning as a wise-cracking, useless errand boy in his father's comic book office, young Bill succeeded in annoying as many people as possible, including Max Gaines who was sure his son would amount to nothing in life. In a matter of years, however, Bill would find himself the sudden publisher of a line of comics and the strange ambition to make the best of everything.

It is all here for the comic book and humor enthusiast—the E.C story, complete with the plaudits and hassles; the birth of Mad; the Gaines-Kurtzman parting; the worries, the joys and even Rex Gaines. It is all told, not as a history, but rather who they effected and affected Bill Gaines.

Jacobs does an excellent job of weaving the history of Gaines' publishing efforts with his personality and habits. All the stories and opinions are not taken from a singular source—countless people are quoted and profiled as to their versions of what *did* happen to Bill Gaines.

A good part of the book is centered around Gaines' exploits at and with *Mad*. Most of the staff members are included, as are chapters on all the *Mad* legal problems, the *Mad* trips, and the atmosphere that prevails daily in such a "mad" world.

If Jacobs properly profiles Gaines, than the *Mad* publisher certainly must approve highly of the book. It is immaculate in structure and does not attempt to make Gaines a saint . . . or anyone else the heavy. It succeeds as a biography for the simple fact that once you have finished the book, you feel as though you know Bill Gaines personally.

So well, in fact, that you wonder if Gaines did not duplicate the Howard Hughes/Clifford Irving entanglement merely for the benefit of Jacobs, just to show him that he cannot write a biography of Gaines, no matter how good, and get away with it.

Gary Brown

FANZINES

One of the most complete fanzines available for the collector is Richard Kyle's *Graphic Story World*. Avail-

able at $3 for six issues. *GSW* features articles and news from all over the world, highlighting the past, present and future of comic books. Done in a slick, professional style, *GSW* is one of those "musts" for anyone who considers himself a collector or fan of comics. The current issue can be ordered from Richard Kyle, P.O. Box 16168, Long Beach, Calif. 90806.

A fine example of a well-rounded comic oriented fan magazine can be found in Martin Greim's *COMIC CRUSADER*. Published several times each year, *CC* offers in-depth articles as well as original and new comic strips. Marty always presents his fanzine in a neat package, decked in professionally illustrated covers and inside spot illustrations. You can order the current issue of *COMIC CRUSADER* for 75¢ from Martin Greim, Box 132, Dedham, Massachusetts 02026.

If you are the type of collector interested in obtaining old issues of your favorite comic, Golden Age material, or just anxious to order issues you some how missed buying, than the *Buyer's Guide* is for you. For just $2 per year, you will receive a new issue every other week. The tabloid-sized paper is full of ads from other comic fans and dealers, offering comics, art, fanzines and other goodies for sale. You can order or inquire about a subscription by writing Buyer's Guide, Dynapubs Enterprises, RR 1, Box 297, East Moline, Ill. 61244.

Another well-packaged, fully-illustrated fanzine is Bill Wilson's *THE COLLECTOR*. Spiced with articles on comics, fiction, an occassional strip and artwork by many of your favorite professionals, *THE COLLECTOR* is well worth your time and money. You can order copies at $1.00 per issue from Bill G. Wilson, 1535 Oneida Drive, Clairton, Pa. 15025.

One of the finest looking and written fanzines produced today is Mike Barrier's *FUNNYWORLD*. Based primarily on funny animal comics and animation, the magazine also offers comic strips and a highly professional quality which is hard to top. Barrier's style of writing and editorial excellence is some of the best in all of fandom, and whether you are acquainted with, or interested in funny animals or animation, you are guaranteed to enjoy *FUNNYWORLD*. Issues can be ordered at $1.25 per copy from Mike Barrier, Box 5229 Brady Station, Little Rock, Arkansas 72205.

Graphic Story Magazine represents the finest quality and writing to be found anywhere in fandom. Each issue is an in-depth study of some aspect of the comic world, decked in color covers and the highest quality of printing. Bill Spicer's efforts have included work by Basil Wolverton, Vaughn Bode, Mike Barrier and anyone else you would care to mention. $1 per issue from 4878 Granada Street, Los Angeles, Calif. 90042.

A relatively new fanzine, which has fast become an excellent showcase for new talent, is *Realm*. The fifth issue features an array of strips, portfolios and articles that would whet any fan's appetite. Your 75¢ for the current issue is a wise investment, and you can order *Realm* from Art Nouveau Publications, 2000 North Grant Avenue, Springfield, Missouri 65803.

If newspaper strips are your game, then you will not want to miss *The Menomonee Falls Gazette*. Published weekly, the Gazette carries all your favorite daily comic strips: Tarzan, Superman, Flash Gordon, Johnny Hazard, Secret Agent Corrigan, Rip Kirby, On Stage, Ben Casey, Ambler, Dateline Danger! and many more. Subscription rates are 12 issues for $4.50 and you are guaranteed fine reading enjoyment every week. The Gazette is published by Street Enterprises, N85 W16505 Mary Court, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin 53051.

CULTISM VS CONSUMERISM

(The analysis in this article is based on an association with the comics industry. It is not meant to be construed as a result of methodical research.)

Quick! Where do you buy your comics? "A candy store." Alright, where else? "Drugstore." Fine. "A supermarket." O.K.

Now, let's change just one word in our question. "Where do you buy your comix?" The answers change too. "A head shop." Sure. "A record store." Of course. "Through the mail." Uh-huh.

Comics and comix. The difference is more than just two letters, and more than just the presence or absence of censorship. It's a whole concept of cultism vs. consumerism. The limited run comix as opposed to the mass produced superbooks of Madison Avenue.

Comics are produced in the hundreds of thousands; few comix reach this level. The companies behind the comix are growing, ambitious and enterprising, yet relatively commercial by impotent. There are many such publishers currently in business: the Rip Off Press, Apex, Print Mint, L. A. Comics and the Krupp Comic Works, as well as a large number of "easy-come, easy go" outfits who spring up periodically.

Unfortunately for these young entrepeneurs, their main business outlet continues to be mail order oriented. Small "head shops" from Boston to Milwaukee to Los Angeles send in requests for certain amounts of certain titles or large quantities of an entire line of comix, and receive their order in the mail.

With the advent of the *Skull*, *Young Lust* and *Fantagor* series of comix, the undergrounds are moving towards some regularity in frequency of publication, but as a whole, they are still sporadically released.

The uncertain scheduling of publication, inherent in the underground comix industry, is both a burden and a blessing, depending upon the point of view, artistically speaking. Shaping production frequency to suit a man's creative output may be a highly laudable standpoint, and would probably be great service to such chronic deadline missers as Neal Adams. Historically, such an outlook might have kept Steranko on *Shield*, or Adams on anything. Unfortunately, such sporadic publication makes a product less desireable for newsstand dealers to stock.

With the many books and magazines that a distributor steadily and regularly handles every month, he has little time or patience with a product that is neither steady nor regular, or for that matter, may never materialize. The high instability factor of the comix can certainly act against the interests of their publishers.

Perhaps a partial answer would be to create a backlog as a balancing factor. Such a system would allow a distributor to keep track of his comix by the number of titles, such as March 1972, 1-2-3-4, rather than the title's name.

Most major comics companies, due to the regular schedule they follow in paying their distributors, do not usually suffer from such problems. Archie, Charlton, National, Gold Key, and Marvel are all reliable companies and can be counted on by a distributor. Due to their schedule-oriented operations, these companies get priority service over the less rigidly turned-out underground publications.

Consistant publication is the order of the day at all major companies. They have found that planning to suit the creative output results in entropy. Books are prepared by the month and issue number. Issues are coded as if they were part of a computer operation.

The individual who misses deadlines, be he penciller, inker, writer or letterer, must explain to the company why his book is late. The company does not have to explain to its employees why they have been given such tight deadlines. Comics are big business. Comics take advertising. Comics are regulated. Comics, to a distributor, are commercial products. Comix, to a distributor, remain objects of art.

Quality of published material plays a role in what we are to view as a form of cultism vs. consumerism. The comix are slowly becoming more polished and professional, but they are still plagued by an overwhelming amount of incompetent drawing, poor taste and weak writing. Thus, graphically and intellectually, many comix remain as little more than trashcan liners. Many comics, notably some reprint books, deserve this fate also, but they can more easily hide their faults under a strata of color and charisma.

Comics and color, which have technically reached new heights due to the efforts of Jack Adler, Titjana Wood and Steranko, are a strong force to overcome. But comix color, being developed by Crumb and Corben, is proving to be a worthy challenge. Technically, comics are far superior to comix, and can more easily gloss over their mistakes, but the willingness of comix creators to move in new directions, and their increasing use of color makes one more aware of their potential quality.

Which brings us to the issue of, "Who gets the comics/comix?" We know where they get them, and we know the technical quality of what is available. Now we must determine who makes up the great bulk of "they". We can divide "them" into two basic groups, the cultists and the consumers.

The cultists compose the bulk of the comix buying public. The cultists are "into" comix. The cultist may be a high school student, a college junior or what the media calls, a "hippie." But their interest in comix is more than a quick 10 minute bathroom session every 8 months. Comix are too expensive for that. The comix cultist has his favorites and follows their stories religiously. The comix buyer is a specialty buyer, consciously supporting his favorite books—often because their approach to humor or adventure parallels his.

While cultists make up the bulk of the comix buying public, they only constitute a minority portion of the overall comics scene. The bulk of the comics readers are casual consumers. The devoted Marvelites and general comics "fans" do not characterize the current buying public. Most of the comics are bought in a whimsical, erratic manner which shows little favoritism or reason, as the failure of Kirby's recent books for National shows.

Here the product, which is emphasized as a package, takes precedent over craft when it comes time for a company to select material. Another sales factor is one of character recognition and association. Just as the names Hulk and Spiderman are synonymous with Lee and Marvel, and draw their own pictures in the readers' mind, the underground comix seek to generate a similar interaction with Fritz The Cat, Wonder Wart-Hog and Moondog, and their creators Robert Crumb, Gilbert Shelton and George Metzger.

Comix cultists have motivations for their actions, just like people who follow soap operas on TV, or daily human interest comic strips. They're in it for the story, and the identification it allows them with the situations in which the characters find themselves.

For the future, hope is partially placed in the efforts of comix publishers to reach and surpass the technical and artistic qualities of comics companies. For their part, comics publishers will hopefully strive for a deeper concern for the importance of creativity over productivity, as practiced by the current, changing comix field.

Byron Preiss

NATIONAL NEWS

National Periodicals will be skipping all May and June issues on their indicia in order to catch up with the cover release dates that Marvel runs. As it is now, DC books (that come out at the same time as the Marvel books)appear to be older because they are a month or two behind on the cover listing. So in order to even things up, the months of May and June will be forwarded to June and July. NO BOOKS WILL MISS A SCHEDULED RELEASE DATE, they will just be dated differently.

The Jack Kirby books continue to roll along, as *Mister Miracle* 14 presents "Madame Evil Eyes" and the next issue introduces Shilo, a new Mister Miracle regular in "The Secret Gun."

"Demon of the Sewers" is in

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8 and 9. In this double-epic, Jason Blood discovers a way to destroy the Demon, but has to bring him back to save Glenda.

There was a slip-up in *The Demon* 11 the white streak in Jason Blood's hair is missing. This happened before in issue 3 of this same magazine, somehow getting past Jerry Serpe, Jack Adler and E. Nelson Bridwell who handles Jack's books in New York. Oh well, you can't win 'em all.

There is a 3-part Frankenstein tale beginning in issue 12 that features a Kirby adaptation with a mysterious Baron Von Evilstein. The monster itself has no name as usual.

Kamandi 7 features a gorilla god named "Tiny" and does take-off on the King Kong movie, with Kamandi in the Fay Wray role, believe it or not.

Number 8 will introduce some new animal mutations into Kamandi's world, bears, this time, while issue 9 takes him to the home of the radioactive man, Ben Boxer, in a story titled "Tracking Site."

Phantom Stranger 26 will be Len Wein's last story for that book and will be called "From Dust Thou Art." Arnold Drake takes over the scripting chores with the next issue.

Drake will also be writing the Deadman series for *Adventure Comics*. As one of Deadman's originators in *Strange Adventures*, Arnold will once again piece the life of Deadman together.

Shazam 5 carries "The Man Who Wasn't," by Elliot Maggin and C.C. Beck and "Toughest Guy on Earth." The first story is about Captain Marvel's encounter with a leprechaun in New York City and the second is a spin-off of the Sunny Sparkle story in a previous issue. *Shazam* 4 features O'Neil's return of "IBAC, the Cursed," and Maggin's "The Mirrors That Revealed the Future." Issue 3 will be a Marvel Family cover and feature "Witch's Tale" as the Fawcett reprint. The figure of Captain Marvel Jr. was colored by accident the same as the

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Big Red Cheese himself. The color proofs hung on the walls several days before somebody did a double take and realized Jr's outfit is blue with red trim, not red with yellow. What a collector's item that would have been!

C. C. Beck has recently completed a cover for a giant-sized issue of *Shazam*, which will cost $1, much like the *Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer* special DC issued around Christmas of last year. Word has it that the bulk of the issue will be reprinted games and puzzles from old Fawcett issues of Captain Marvel. It will also reproduce material from *COMIXSCENE* and Volume Two of Steranko's *HISTORY OF COMICS*.

Editor Julius Schwartz says that eventually all of the Marvel Family will be reintroduced and brought back to active roles in comic books. The catch is that Julie does not want to rush things and will bring them back slowly through walk-ons in *Shazam*.

Justice League of America will present "Crisis on Earth X" in 107 and will follow up with "13 Against the Earth" in the next issue, featuring the array of Quality characters mentioned in *Comixscene* 2.

Flash 222 features the first Flash-Green Lantern team-up in years, under the guidance of Cary Bates and Irv Novick in "The Heart that Attacked the Earth."

"The Batman Nobody Knows" by

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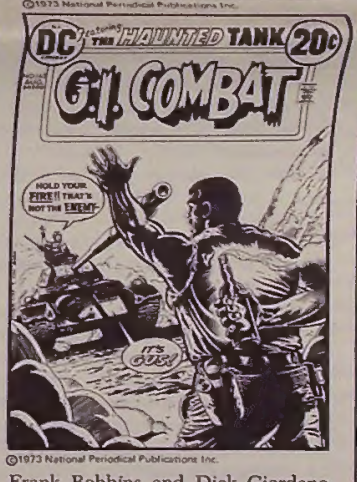

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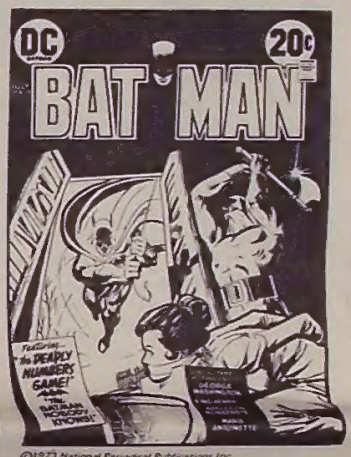
Frank Robbins and Dick Giordano has been called "One of the most absorbing Batman stories ever," by editor Schwartz. It appears in *Batman* 250 along with the Robbins-Novick "The Deadly Number Game," and "The Return of the Flying Graysons," which features Robin. *Batman* 251 will carry the first Neal Adams Batman story in quite a while, "The Joker's Five Way Revenge," with a script by Denny O'Neil. Neal will also be doing a six-page Human Target story over Len Wein's breakdowns to fill-in for Dick Giordano who was out of commission for a while with the flu.

Detective Comics, soon to go under the editorship of Archie Goodwin, will feature two Frank Robbins stories, "The Spook" and "The Spook Strikes Again."

The artwork on Archie's *Detective Comics* will be handled in the future by Jim Aparo, who is now available for the extra work. The back-up feature for the book will be Manhunter by Walt Simonson. Archie will be doing most of the scripting in his books to achieve a uniformity and cohesion.

Strange Sports Stories 1 will be carrying all new material, including "Beat the Devil," a baseball tale by Frank Robbins and Curt Swan, and a bowling story entitled "A Tall Tale of Ten Pins." The second issue will run Denny O'Neil's "Karate on the Moon."

Berni Wrightson has committed himself for the eventual Batman-Shadow team-up to be written by Denny O'Neil. It will be called "Who Knows What Evil" (catchy, eh?) and in the story Batman admits that the Shadow was his hero and had



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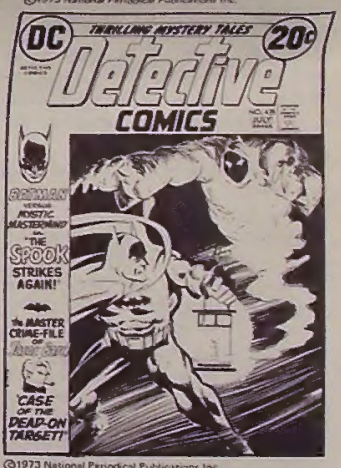

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an influence on his crimefighting career. *The Shadow* book is finally scheduled for July release. Neal Adams has drawn a *Batman* cover depicting a shadow-like Batman struggling with a werewolf at a construction site. Len Wein has scripted a tale around the year-old cover titled, "Moon of the Prowling Wolf."

Fritz Leiber dropped into the National offices last month to see the place and people who produced his Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser comic stories in *Sword of Sorcery*. He met Julie Schwartz for the second time, but did not quite recognize him until Julie pulled out a picture of the two of them from an old science fiction convention.

The *DC Super Spectacular* 50¢

book 18 will be a special 35th Anniversary issue for Superman and will feature stories from each of the three-and-one-half decades he has been around: "I Sustain the Wings" from the 40's and written by Mort Weisenger while in the army, "Superboy's Last Day in Smallville," from the 50's and "Superman Red, Superman Blue", representing the 60's. There will also be two Atom stories, one of the old Atom and one of the newer (60's variety) Atom. TNT and Dan the Dynamite, Hourman and Capt. Triumph will also appear in stories in this issue.

Tarzan will be the topic of *DC Super Spectacular* 19 and will sport a Joe Kubert cover and Russ Manning Sunday pages for the interior.

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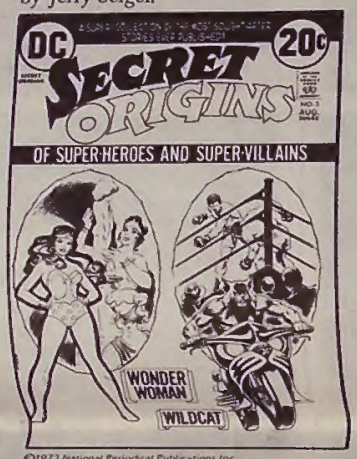
The Manning pages will take up where the *Tarzan Digest* left off in the sequence.

The 20th DC *Super Spectacular* will be a Batman issue, featuring 3 stories concerning the villain Two-Face: "The Crimes of Two-Face," "The Man Who Led A Double Life," and "The End of Two-Face." Also included in the book are: The Wildcat in "The Count That Never Ended," Blackhawk in a team-up with "The Woman Called Fear," the Black Canary in "An Orchid for the Deceased," The Spectre in "The Menace from the World in a Picture" and a Dr. Midnite story by Alex Toth.

Number 21 is a Superboy issue with a prophetic story from 1947 that predicts the VTOL planes of today titled "The Miracle Plane." There is also a tale of "The Superboy Revenge Squad." The Legion of Super-heroes appear in "The Super Moby Dick of Space." The forerunners of the Teen Titans are here in "The Thousand-And-One Dooms of Mr. Twister." Even Supergirl gets a story in this book in "Leena Thuro-Jungle Princess," while Kid Eternity rounds things out in "The Beagle."

The Flash will headline the 22nd *Super Spectacular* in the 40-page long "Campaign Against the Flash" from 1943. The story in which Kid Flash gets his new costume is also being reprinted, "The Secret of the Three Superweapons." Captain Cold appears in "The Man Who Mastered Absolute Zero," the Elongated Man in "The Riddle of the Sleepy-Time Taxi," and a Johnny Quick tale, "The Slo-Poke Crimes."

Secret Origins will feature the 2-part origin of the Spectre as its only feature—art by Bernard Bailey, story by Jerry Seigel.



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Wanted 9 will be running a Sandman vs. Nightshade story and a Superman-Prankster get-together. *Secret Origins*, meanwhile, will be featuring an eight-page Mort Meskin Vigilante story and a 15-page Kid Eternity tale by Sheldon Moldoff.

National will be dropping their page count from 22 to 20 per issue, while Marvel will be featuring 19-pages of non-advertising material in every book.

Johnny Thunder will be cancelled with issue 3, while *Legion of Super-Heroes* will continue until 4. The last issue of *Johnny Thunder* features an exceptionally nice Alex Toth cover reprint.

Kubert is working on several top secret projects—but a more than educated guess would be, a new jungle feature (could it possibly be Kubert's sensational prehistoric strip, *Tor*?). Allegedly, the feature will be drawn by Nestor Redondo, with Tony DeZuniga working on a science-fiction back-up feature. Whatever it is, you'll read it here first!

One of newly-appointed editor Joe Simon's first books is titled *Prez, First Teen President of the USA*. Inspired by the 1968 film, "Wild in the Streets" starring Chris Jones, the premier issue details "The Making of The Prez." Word has it that Jerry Grandenetti is pencilling with Craig Flessel inking.

John Albano has apparently returned to National after a short stint at Marvel. He'll continue to script

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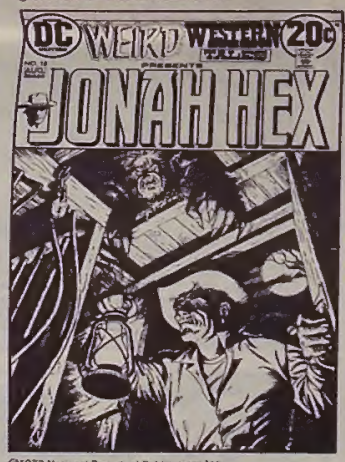

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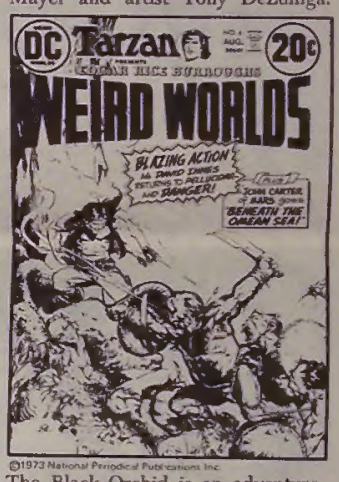
mystery tales, but his Jonah Hex series has been taken over by another writer, perhaps Mike Fleisher.

The editorship of Dark Mansions has been turned over to Denny O'Neil, giving Joe Orlando more time to work on *PLOP* (its working title was *Weird Humor*, the new humor book which has been bouncing around National for the past few months. Steve Skeates and Sergio Aragones will write. Sergio and Berni Wrightson are doing art for the book, which will be 32-pages with no ads. The first issue features a Basil Wolverton back cover. Both Wolverton and Aragones are *Mad* contributors.

With the eighth issue of *Weird Worlds* there will no longer be any Edgar Rice Burroughs characters in the book. They will be replaced in all the other DC books except the *Tarzan* and *Korak* titles. John Carter and Pellucidar are apparently being dropped because the royalties to the Burrough's estate are too stiff. Replacing John Carter and David Innes will be Iron Wolf, the Howie Chaykin character who was described in *Comixscene* 1. Iron Wolf is a doctor, pirate, swordsman, philosopher and anything else you would care to mention. Denny O'Neil writes this book-length series, set in the far future when Earth is sold to a group of aliens. Chaykin will pencil, with Walt Simonson inking and lettering. Each main character reportedly has his own individual lettering style in balloons.

Wein and Wrightson's *Swamp Thing* 7 is titled, "Night of the Bat," the first guest-star crossover of the series. Who? You guessed it—Batman! Minor developments—the conclave ends and the death of the Fat Man. Len will also be writing dialogue for National's Frankenstein strip in *Phantom Stranger* over Marv Wolfman's plots.

Captain Fear will be dropped from the pages of *Adventure*. Scheduled as its replacement is The Black Orchid, a new strip by writer Shelly Mayer and artist Tony DeZuniga.



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The Black Orchid is an adventure-heroine with an identity so secret, we'll have to guess which one of the several girls in the strip she really is. Deadman writers utilized a similiar idea by keeping the villain (The Hook) a secret by never deciding themselves just who he really was. Three Black Orchid stories have already been produced so far, and will probably be backed-up by mystery man Dr. 13.

The first Joe Simon-Jack Kirby comic book story in 15 years is now in the making at National. Joe Simon has scripted a new Sandman story called "Sandman, The Master of Dreams" and Jack Kirby will pencil it, allowing Mike Royer to do the inking. Sandman will be given a new costume by Kirby and nobody is sure whether this will be the beginning of a new series or just a one-shot appearance. It will appear as a Kirby edited book.

The publicity for this nostalgic resurrection is going to be touted as "a triple treat from a terrific trio—Kirby-Simon-Royer."

More details on the Sandman title in the next issue of *Comixscene*, along with a preview of the cover. Stay tuned!

FROGS!
EXTERNAL VIEW OF A FROG
STEFANKO

PERATING RO

MARVEL NEWS

Plans for the new black and white books at Marvel are moving full-speed ahead, while writers and artists on the comic line are shuffled around and rearranged. The second issue of *Dracula Lives!* will retell the vampire's origin, illustrated by Neal Adams, who has already turned in 6 pages for the tale. Should he miss his deadline, John Buscema will finish the story.

The second black and white book from Marvel will be called *Monsters Unleashed* and will feature monster-oriented tales, as well as a cover by Gray Morrow. Included in the first issue will be the start of the Ralph Reese illustrated "Solomon Kane" series and a story titled "The Man Who Cried Werewolf," by the master of the unexpected, Robert Bloch. This book is slated for a March release.

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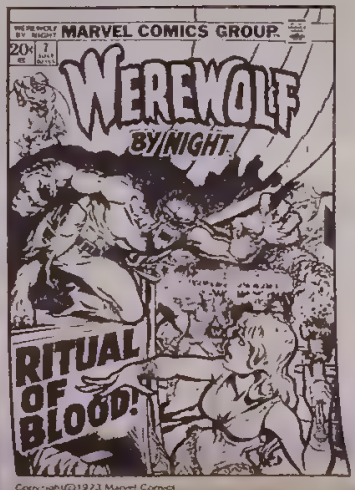
Due out in April is *Tales of the Zombie*, based on a character called the Zombie. The first story will be a 27-page epic written by Roy Thomas and Steve Gerber, and drawn by Bill Everett, John Buscema and Tom Palmer. The story is woven around a 7-page Everett story from the 1950's and divided into three chapters. The cover for the first issue of this magazine was done by Boris Vallejo.

The fourth book, ready in May, is titled *Vampire Tales*, which should be a pretty good indication of what the book is about. The first issue will feature a visualization of the first vampire story ever, "Vampyre," written in the early 1800's by Polidori. The mainstay of the book will be Morbius, the same character who bugged Spiderman for a half-dozen or so issues about a year ago. A Roy Thomas/Gil Kane creation, Morbius proved to be the impetus for some of the highest-selling issues of *Spiderman* ever, and therefore merited his own strip. Tom Sutton will handle the graphics, while Steve Gerber does the writing for the series.

The digest pulp book has been retitled (again) and will be released under the title of *The Haunt of Horror*. Created with the horror-filled pulps of the 30's and 40's in mind, the premier issue will feature Robert E. Howard's "Usurp the Night," Fritz Leiber's "Conjure Wife," and will also use the works of such writers as Harlan Ellison and R. A. Lafferty. Gray Morrow painted the cover for this first issue, while Mike Ploog did a number of



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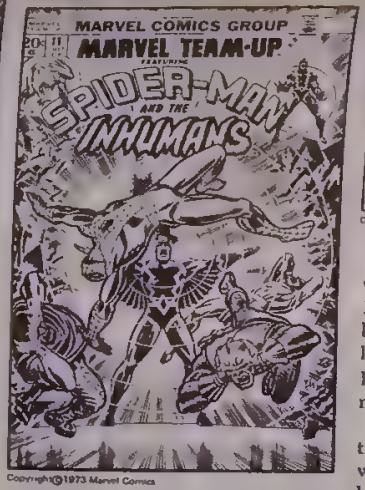

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inside illustrations for the book. The second issue features Anne McCaffery, Ron Goulart, Lin Carter, Denny O'Neil, and Fritz Leiber. Kelly Freas painted the cover.

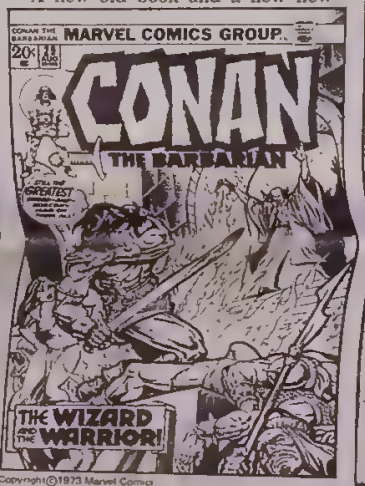
The *Dracula* comic book is set for some unusual changes as Marv Wolfman continues handling the writing chores. In issue 9, the Count seeks refuge with humans for the first time in his death, while 10 introduces a new character called The Blade—a black vampire hunter who is immune to vampire bites and is after Drac's bat-like form with a sling of wooden knives as weapons. The next book is a Voodoo issue and 12 begins a two-part story centered around a haunted house and the demise of several key characters in the series. A future issue will take Dracula to Los Angeles where he battles another Dracula. Wolfman has 'em by the box full, doesn't he?

Jack Able will ink issue 10 of the *Tomb of Dracula* as Tom Palmer continues to lend his talent to more pressing books such as a Brunner-pencilled Dr. Strange story. Palmer will also be doing some pencilling and inking in the black and white books.

The Kenneth (Lester Dent) Robeson novels will continue to be adapted for the *Doc Savage* comic book. The latest is "The Monsters," a two-parter in issues 5 and 6. Steve Englehart will do the plotting, while Gardener Fox takes on the writing of the dialogue. Ross Andru continues to do the pencils and Tom Palmer the inks, although there will be a different inker on the second half of the adaptation, but only to allow Palmer to catch up on his other work.

There is talk that Barry Smith has started a 50-page Conan story for a special giant color issue of *Conan*, possibly an annual.

A new old book and a new new book are scheduled to be released by Marvel this spring. *Strange Tales* will be reincarnated beginning with 1 again and introducing a new series by Len Wein and Gene Colan. The lead character in the series is called Brother Voodoo. More about this new character next issue.



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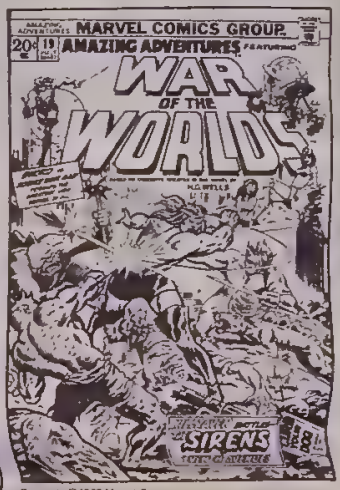
Worlds Unknown, the science fiction comic already in production, will feature "A Gun For Dinosaur" by L. Sprague DeCamp in the second issue. Val Mayerik and Ernie Chua will handle the illustrating on this story while Roy Thomas handles the adaptation. Kane, Sutton and Conway will team-up for a story entitled "Doorstep," adapted from a Keith Laumer short story. *Worlds Unknown* will feature all new stories of science fiction from the second issue on.

Two-part stories seem to be the "in" thing up at Marvel this month, as *Werewolf By Night* begins a two-parter called "The Carnival of Fear." Our hero (called the "Spiderman in fur" by the bullpen) finds himself kidnapped and placed in a circus sideshow. If that is not enough trouble, a policeman named Lou Hackett begins following the Werewolf, determined to capture him. Werner Roth is slated to pick up this series with Frank Bolle inking. Incidentally, Bolle will also delineate Brown's Avengers.

Amazing Adventures 19 will feature "Sirens of Seventh Avenue," drawn by Chaykin and set in the year 2087, as is the rest of the series. Killraven's super-type outfit will be eliminated in the following issue when Herb Trimpe takes over the art chores on the strip. Plans are to deck the hero out in the garb of warriors from several periods of earth's history.

Warlock will be showcasing some interesting switch-abouts as the battles on Earth-Two continue. Victor Von Doom is cast as a rather serious scientist, while Reed Rich-



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ards ends up becoming a savage monster called The Brute! Gil Kane, Roy Thomas and Tom Sutton continue on the series for the next few issues until Bob Brown takes over this book and *The Avengers*.

Iron Man will find himself up against a pair of old Marvel villains, when he tackles The Marauder and that hot-under-the-collar guy, The Firebrand.

Don Perlin will render a Sub-Mariner job over Don Heck's pencils. John Verpoorten will be inking Mike Ploog's Frankenstein with issue 4 as the book goes monthly. Ploog promises to do his best to maintain his rigorous schedule.

Spoof dies again, this time with issue 6. Len Wein's satire of the

television series "Kung Fu" (entitled "Kung Fooey") was scheduled for 7 and Len hopes it will be pushed ahead to see print before the magazine fades. Len will be keeping busy at Marvel, taking over the writing on *Thor* for a single issue and *King Kull*. He begins in issue 9 with "The Purple Kingdom."

The Thing team-up book which was mentioned in the last issue of *Comixscene*, will materialize in the *Marvel Feature* title. The first team-up is the natural merging of the Thing and the Hulk. The second issue will match our ever' lovin' blue-eyed friend with Sub-Mariner.

The Avengers 113 will feature Steve Englehart writing and Bob Brown (*Challengers, Space Ranger*) on pencils. The Doc Strange stories

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in *Marvel Premiere* will be handled by Englehart and Frank Brunner for the time being.

The Vision and The Scarlet Witch will soon announce to the world that they are in love, and the world will be outraged. The public outcry, as well as Quicksilver's protests, will cause some pretty weighty problems.

Daredevil continues to have his problems, the least of which is who will write and draw his book this month. Steve Gerber will be the regular writer now, while Don Heck takes over pencilling chores after a fill-in issue by Syd Shores. Look for another new writer, Chris Clairmont, on an upcoming issue of *DD*.

There are a good number of ideas circling the future of the *Fantastic Four*, although nothing has actually been set down on paper as of yet. Gerry Conway takes over the writing chores and among his plans will be new developments in the Alicia Masters-Ben Grimm relationship, as well as some new twists in the role and character of Wyatt Wingfoot. Return visits will be made by Dr. Doom and Coach Thorpe, when the occasion allows. Roy Thomas will return to plot the *FF* book for the 137th and 138th issues, with the stories being set in the 1950's. "Rock Around The Cosmos" and "Rumble on Planet Three" are the tentative titles. You can look for more emphasis being placed on the Human Torch in the near future and the Richards' baby will begin to develop into something special. The Hulk will also be featured in an upcoming guest role with the FF.

With the death of Gwen Stacy, Peter Parker is going to get a new girlfriend. To this end, Mary Jane Watson is going to re-enter the Spider-Man saga although she will take a while to mature enough for the part. Plans are very vague concerning Harry Osborne's role in this development, but he will be gradu-

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ally phased out of the picture.

As if Spiderman didn't have enough troubles, J. Jonah Jameson takes it upon himself to hire Luke Cage to hunt down our web-spinning friend. In the meantime, Liz Allen returns to complicate the life of Peter Parker and a scientific werewolf named Man-Wolf appears to hound our hero.

Thor will be meeting some old friends in the near future as writer Gerry Conway has a reunion with Sif planned, along with the return of the 4-D Man and the Rigelian Colonizers. Len Wein will be writing a fill-in issue of *Thor* for Gerry, while Gerry fills in for an issue of *Daredevil*. Who says this isn't the Marvel Age of fill-ins?

Sal Buscema has pencilled an issue of *Thor* over John Buscema's layouts.

Ramona Fraydon, the original artist on Aquaman and Metamorpho, has not only done an issue of *Fantastic Four* and was to have drawn *The Cat*.Unfortunately, *The Cat* will be cancelled with the fifth issue due to poor sales. The Antman series is also slated for termination, once again the victim of too little support.

Len Wein and Jim Mooney will be handling the future issues of *Marvel Team-Up* and set for the next few months is a three-part story that teams Spidey with Iron Man, The Human Torch and The Inhumans as they do battle against Kang and Tomorrow Man. With all those people in the story, they need three parts.

The Black Panther will begin his own series in the pages of *Jungle Action*, handled by newcomer Don McGregor and Rich Buckler. Rich will also draw *Daredevil* 101.

Don has already planned far ahead in his Black Panther series. The main action will take place in the land of the Wakanda, and Monica Lynne, from some previous Avenger's episodes, will be the Panther's lady fair. Murder, mystery,

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civil war, and jungle adventure are all in the works. Villains are going to be introduced as needed, but the main conflict will center around a whip-wielding snake in the grass named Venom, a vicious she-devil named Malice, and their leader, Eric Killmonger, "the biggest, baddest, blackest dude in comics."

Billy Graham has worked up a presentation on a new sword and sorcery character as reported in *COMIXSCENE* 1. Graham's black barbarian, Zuma, will probably turn up as a one-shot, and, if it is well received, possibly a new book.

Artist Alan Weiss tackles Captain America in a forthcoming issue featuring the star-spangled avenger. This round, Cap faces the villainess Nightshade, the Yellow Claw, and his own partner, the Falcon who has turned into a—werewolf? Hmmm!

More changes: *Gunhawks* will soon become just plain *Reno Jones* (Shaft in chaps?) when his saddle-pal, Kid Cassidy, heads for the last round-up. S'long, pardner!

Reno will also be getting a new outfit when he starts to solo. Seems as though Marvel decided he needed a bit more color in his life!

Marvel's runaway hit, *The Ghost Rider*, gets his own book soon, leaving the *Marvel Spotlight* slot open for still another series. The monster-hero trend continues with a replacement series entitled *The Mark of Satan*, featuring the Devil himself as the lead character. To hell with underlings!!

Marvel is currently enjoying a great deal of popularity in England as they reprint material from the beginning of the Marvel Age with new covers being done by Al Milgrom, Dick Ayres and Rich Buckler. The adventures of Spider-man, The Hulk, FF, Thor, and Daredevil are reprinted in two weekly magazines: *The Mighty World of Marvel* and *The New Spiderman Weekly*. These

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magazines are printed with some pages in two colors with minor changes to conform with the British market. These changes are being made by letterer Tom Orzechowski and artist-inker Mike Esposito.

There is a good possibility that the best selling Spiderman record will have a follow up version, this time written by Gerry Conway and based on an upcoming adventure that teams Spidey and Luke Cage.

There has also been some talk about an animated Marvel Christmas Special, featuring all (or most) of the Marvel characters. Word has it that this would be a prime time project and not merely a Saturday morning special.

LAST MINUTE NEWS: Will Eisner has apparently signed a contract with Marvel Comics to turn out a *National Lampoon* type magazine. Eisner is currently looking about for material to feature in the projected venture.

Next issue: the full rundown on Marvel's future entries into the comic world, plus a listing of their new Spanish and English artists, and the latest mind-boggling changes. Nuff said!

A Terror Tales cover from September 1940 reveals the typical pulp format—mad scientist, lady in distress, weird setting

HORROR IN THE PULPS

October 1933 is not considered an important month in the history of the comic book. Yet it was during that time that one of the most influential occurances in comic history took place. *Dime Mystery Novels* changed its title to *Dime Mystery* and switched format from featuring long detective novels to shorter stories of horror and weird menace. If the pulps can be considered an uncle to the comic book as Steranko acutely observed in *The History of Comics*, then there is a close blood tie between *Dime Mystery* and the horror comics of the fifties, sixties and seventies. *Tales from the Crypt, Vault of Horror*, and every weird horror comic to follow owes a large debt to the stories published in *Dime Mystery, Horror Stories*, and *Terror Tales*.

Dime Mystery Novels had been in existence since December 1932 and had not been one of the successes of the Popular Publications chain of magazines. So, using the Grand Guignol of Paris for his inspiration, Henry Steeger, the publisher of Popular, completely revamped the format of Dime Mystery Novels.

The Grand Guignol was a famous theater in Paris that specialized in stories of monstrous tortures and ghastly crimes. Unusual effects were often used to frighten the audience. The formula for the horror magazines of Popular Publications depended on these staples. Torture, gruesome crimes and bizarre trickery were to form an integral part of the horror story used in *Dime Mystery* and its offspring.

Rogers Terrill, one of the best editors in the pulp field, was given command of *Dime Mystery* and within a short time, the magazine was one of the major titles in the pulp field. So successful was *Dime Mystery* that in September 1934, Popular brought out another magazine of the same exact type. This time, the company made sure that there would be no chance of mistaking the contents by calling the new magazine *Terror Tales*. In January 1935, *Horror Stories* joined the other two to form Popular's "Big Three" of weird menace magazines.

These magazines were often imitated by other publishers but never achieved the success of the Popular group. For one thing, the other magazines did not have Rogers Terrill as editor. Another reason was that the other magazines were too imitative. The stories published in *Ace Mystery, Real Mystery, Eerie Mystery* and a half-dozen others read exactly as if the stories had been copied from the Popular Publications formula. Even the cover art of the other magazines was a copy of the covers from *Terror Tales* and *Horror Stories*.

The stories in the three Popular Publications magazines were interchangable. Rogers Terrill, first in a trade magazine and later in the magazines themselves, defined the difference between horror and terror. Horror is the feeling one would get when seeing something frightening from a safe distance. Terror would be the feeling when the person suddenly realized that he would be the next victim. However, there is little evidence that Terrill actually used these definitions in deciding what stories went in what magazine.

The authors who wrote the stories for *Horror, Terror*, and *Dime Mystery* were professional pulp writers of the highest caliber. The stories they wrote followed a fairly narrow formula and yet they continued to develop new plot lines and unusual twists. In an article in one of the writer's magazines of the period, Norvell Page described how he would sometimes rewrite the first page of a pulp manuscript eight or ten times until he felt that the beginning of his story achieved the proper mood. Page was a craftsman who is known mainly for being the author of The Spider, but he wrote a number of excellent stories for *Horror* and *Terror* as well.

Arthur Leo Zagat was another contributor to *The Spider Magazine* who also did a great deal of work for *Dime Mystery, Terror Tales*, and *Horror Stories*. Zagat wrote fifty stories for the three magazines. Bruno Fischer, well known for a number of fine detective novels, wrote a great many stories for the group under the pen-name of Russell Gray. Numerous other pulp writers of the 1930's were also regulars for Popular's weird menace magazines.

The formula used in the magazines was fairly rigid. Some terrible evil, such as a plague, a rash of suicides, a number of unsolved murders, take place. The hero investigates. Either he suspects a close friend, the heroine, or himself of being behind the tragedies. At the end, in a scene of destruction and torture, the true villain is revealed. Several gruesome deaths and usually a torture or two take place.

The Popular magazines did not feature any great amount of sex, though in many stories the heroine is stripped of all clothing by the leering villain or loathsome monster. Rape was never a motivating factor in any of the stories. However, torture and mutilation were quite common in many of the tales. As pulp authority Bob Jones stated in his essay on the weird menace magazines, "Murder was never ordinary. Nor were those who perpetrated it. The more deformed or grotesque a character in a story, the more certain the reader could be that he was all bad." Hunchbacks, evil dwarfs, twisted men, old hags, bloated corpses, madmen and madwomen all made their way through story after story in the three magazines.

The titles of the stories were designed to catch reader interest. Though many of the titles sounded the same (and were probably often decided by Rogers Terrill) they have a certain flair that has never been duplicated in any other publication since. The contents for a typical issue might include "Girls Enslaved in Glass." "Meat for Satans Icebox," "I Steal Your Blood," "Beware of Purple Flesh" and others.

Titles often had very little to do with the actual story. Most people never cared. Who could dislike such names like "The Mole Men Want Your Eyes," "Flesh for the Swamp Men," "The Dead Must Eat," "The Damned May Dance With Satan," "Lair of the Mindless Ones," "Shrine of the Devil Dolls," and "The Devil's Blood Bath?"

Nat Schachner, a veteran of the science fiction and adventure pulps of the day was a master of the stirring title. Some of his classics include "Cauldrons of the Damned," "The Corpses' Christmas Party," "Death's Lips are Hot," "Eat, Drink, and Diel," "Hosts of the Leper King," "Vault of the Damned," and "Kiss of the Iron Maiden."

Another writer who featured stories with astonishing titles was Paul Ernst, a well known writer for *Weird Tales*, who was later to author the Avenger series for Street and Smith. Ernst came forth with titles "Bride of the Mummy," "Death Calls with Music," "Flesh Feeder," "Guests of the Loved Dead," "He Asked For Hell," "The Monster Who Worked in Clay," "Slaves of the White Madness," "The Town the Dead Things Claimed," and "We Heard the Devil Laugh." Still, few could match the artistry of Wayne Rogers with his spectacular titles "I Am A Frankenstein," "Flesh for the Devil's Piper," and the unmatched "The Dead Hate the Living."

No survey of the horror magazines published by Popular would be complete without mention of the cover and interior artwork featured in the three magazines. It was this art that gave the magazines the reputation of being mainly about sex. Most of the interior artwork was done by Amos Sewell, now an artist for the slick magazines. Sewell often featured completely nude women being menaced by the gruesome monster villain of the story. Later artwork by Paul Orban, Ralph Carlson, and Dave Berger followed this pattern until very late in the 1930's, when the girls again started to appear fully clothed or at least in less revealing poses.

The covers for *Terror Tales* and *Horror Stories* are one of the major reasons that the magazines are among the most collected of all pulp magazines. Walter Baumhofer was responsible for most of the early covers for *Dime Mystery*. John Howett, who also did many superb paintings for *The Spider* and *Operator 5* did a majority of the cover paintings for the other two magazines. At first, the covers for the magazines featured somewhat symbolic scenes, with the ever-present girl being menaced by some symbolic horror, including a hand rising out of a lake of blood, a giant skeleton, or a group of ghouls. Shortly after, the scenes were taken from the story, though the heroine still remained fairly well clothed.

By the middle 1930's, even this had changed. A typical cover might feature a nude girl tied to a slab of wood, with straps at strategic spots, being propelled toward a giant buzzsaw while two grinning madmen watch. Another cover would have the naked girl held in a stock as a laughing maniac advanced toward her with a branding iron. Another cover might feature yet another girl, tied securely, being married to a gruesome monster. Only in 1940, at the very decline of the magazines, did the covers return to more fantastic scenes of horror with little or no sexual overtones.

Dime Mystery was the first to leave the fold. While it lasted to the early 1950's, the magazine had changed format again in 1938. From September 1938 on, it featured only detective stories, with a weird background, but detective stories nonetheless. *Terror* and *Horror* met a different fate. In 1939, the magazines were already in trouble financially after losing the oversea market due to the war.

Then, in late 1939, Fiorello LaGuardia, the mayor of New York, attacked Popular for publishing sex magazines and ordered the publisher to get rid of all the sex and sadism from the stories immediately. With no new formula to follow, the two magazines only lasted a short time and then finally died.

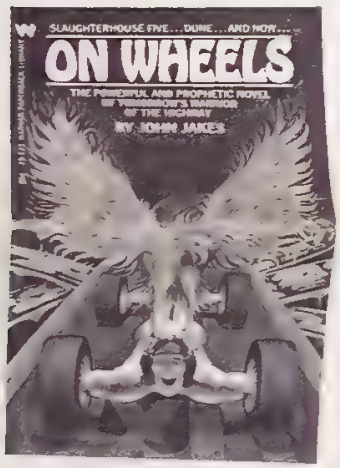
In total, the weird menace magazines published by Popular lasted for a combined total of 151 issues. In a period of less than ten years they had created the mold for the weird horror story from that time on.

Robert Wemberg

MEDIA SCENE

BALLANTINE is re-issuing *The Making of Star Trek* in May for the umpteenth time, along with two new Star Trek books by SF writer David Gerrold. *The Trouble with Tribbles* (from the Star Trek episode of the same name for which he wrote the original screenplay) and *The World of Star Trek*, a personal behind-the-scenes type book. The cost is estimated at $1.50 per book.

BALLANTINE'S April releases are *The Cloud Walker* by Edmund Cooper and *Alien Condition* by Stephen Goldin; in May there's *The Thundering Flood* by William Morris, with an introduction by Lin Carter, *World of Trouble* by Robert Toomey Jr. and a re-issue of *Davey*



by Edgar Pangborn. The books are all $1.25.

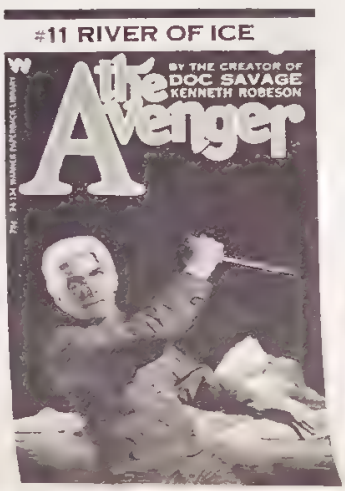
AVON Paperbacks is continuing their Phantom novels written by Lee Falk. The fourth is titled *The Veiled Lady*, with the next three already scheduled.

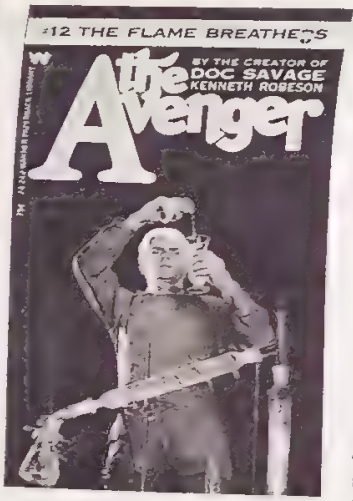
ACE has released the names of the titles being released in April which have won either the Nebula or Hugo award. They are *Babel-17*—Samuel Delany (Nebula), *The Dream Master*—Roger Zelazny (Nebula), *City*—Clifford Simak (Hugo), *Rite of Passage*—Alexei Panshin (Nebula), *This Immortal*—Roger Zelazny (Hugo), and the Ace Double of the month *The Dragon Masters* (Hugo) and *The Last Castle* (Hugo and Nebula) both by Jack Vance. Already released from that batch is *The Big Time*—Fritz Leiber (Hugo), *The Einstein Intersection*—Samuel Delany (Nebula), *The Left Hand of Darkness*—Ursula LeGuin (Hugo and Nebula) and *Dune*—Frank Herbert (Hugo). All are 95¢.

Also from Ace in May are *Warlord of the Air*—Michael Moorcock, *Age of Miracles*—John Brunner, *Dragon Magic* Andre Norton, and the ACE double of the month consists of *Mr. Justice*—Doris Piserchia and *Hierarchies*—John Phillifent.

Ace Paperbacks' Perry Rhodan novels are doing so well that they're being put on a monthly schedule with issue 23, titled *Peril of the Iceworld*. The following releases are entitled *Infinity Flight, Iceworld in Flames*, and *Cosmic Traitor*. Ace is also publishing their Award Series of Hugo and Nebula Award-winning books.

WARNER PAPERBACK LIBRARY has picked up rights to reprint the old Signet editions of Mad paperbacks. They are using new covers and are releasing them at the rate of one a month. The next three are *It's a World, World, World,*





World, Mad, Spy Vs. Spy, and *The Bedside Mad*. In April they are releasing a new Mad book entitled *Rip-Off Mad*.

In May, WPL is releasing the first in a series of books on the popular prime-time TV series UFO, entitled *Flesh Hunters* by Robert Miall. Also coming is *On Wheels* by John Jakes, about Hell's Angels type groups of the future.

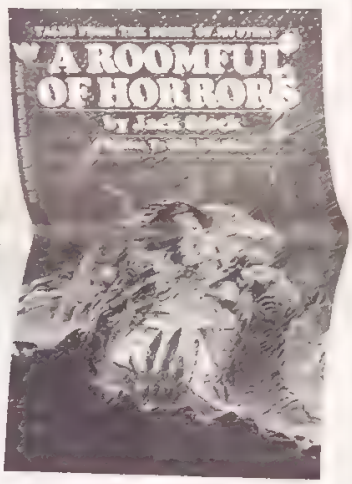
In the months to come, the Warner Paperback Library will continue to release their pulp reprints of the old Avenger series, as well as beginning a series based on the TV show UFO. *A Roomful of Horrors*, by Jack Oleck, marks the beginning of a new string of books based on story adaptations from National Periodicals *House of Mystery* comics.

In the underground field, *The Spirit*, published by Krupp Comics is out. The book features a new wrap-around cover by Eisner, as well as four new pages inside spaced between the four stories reprinted.

Anomaly 4 has made the move from fanzine to underground. Published by Bud Plant and produced by Jan Strnad, Richard Corben and Robert Kline, *Anomaly* features color covers by Corben and three stories. "Alice in Wonderlust" by Corben, "Leander and the Fat Queen" by Strnad and Kline, and "Encounter at War" by Strnad and Corben, redone from *Anomaly* 3.

Fleming H. Revell Co. of Old Tappan, New Jersey is producing comic books for children 10 to 16, highlighting modern Christian adventure stories. The first two titles are "The Cross and the Switchblade" and "God's Smuggler."

Archeologists working under the Basilica of St. Mary Major have discovered 1,600-year-old etchings on the wall with remarkable similarity to Snoopy in Charles Schulz' *Peanuts* strip. Schulz, meanwhile, has been



asked for a divorce from his wife of over 25-years.

A pair of long-time newspaper strips have finally met with an ending, *Terry and the Pirates and Smilin' Jack* will be discontinued this month by their syndicates.

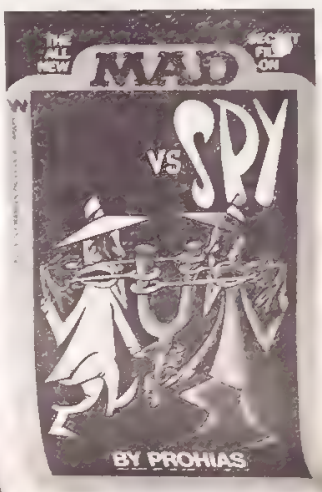
Gene Roddenberry's new TV series, *Genesis II*, will star Alex Cord as Dylan Hunt, a NASA scientist who wakes up after being in suspended animation for 150 years to find that the nuclear holocaust has already taken place and an almost-Utopian world has risen in its ashes.

Roddenberry has also got a few more irons in the fire with *Questor*, an NBC/Universal production about an android perfectly outfitted to be a human and then some. The only problem is, that like Marvel Comics' Vision, he can't decide whether he is man or machine. *Spectre* is also in the offing with a supernatural theme—vampires, demons, weretigers, monsters and more, pitted against the heroes, William Sebastian, Dr. Hamm and Cyon.

Mad Magazine is going to be on TV this fall as a one-hour animated special. The storyboards for the show are being adapted directly from the pages of *Mad*.

WARP is a series of 3 complete 3-hour-long sci-fi plays that together tell a greater story. It was first performed in Chicago last year with great success. On Broadway at the Ambassador Theatre in New York, chapter one (My Battlefield, My Body) started previewing January 30th and closed prematurely on February 18 amidst a host of mixed critical notices and poor reviews. Apparantly the producer withdrew all funds from the play. Unless a miracle occurs, it appears that Warp is dead, and the second and third segments will not be produced.

The production was centered around Cumulus, Defender of Good,



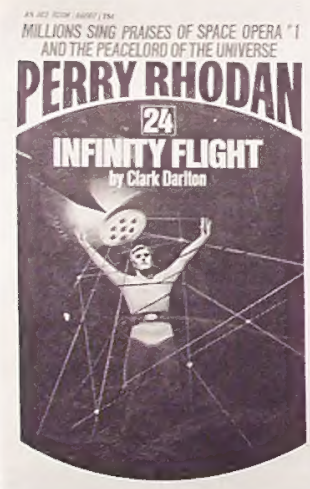
who must battle his evil brother Chaos whose ambition is to destroy the Cosmos. Many of the costumes and background scenes were designed by Neal Adams, as was the advertising for the show.

CINERAMA CORP. will soon be releasing *The Vault of Horror*, the second in a series of anthology horror films that adapts EC horror stories from the fifties. Max Rosenberg and Milt Subotsky who did *Tales from the Crypt* are producing this one also. The cast includes Tom Baker, Michael Craig, Glynis Johns, Edward Judd, Curt Jurgens, Daniel Massey, Terry Thomas, Robin Nedwell, and Geoffrey Davies.

Frank Frazetta is one of the artists who has submitted samples to

do the movie promotional material (posters, Lobby cards, etc.) for *Sinbad's Golden Voyage*, the new Charles Schneer production with animation by Ray Harryhausen. Actual filming has already ended and the special effects that Harryhausen is doing with his own patented system (Dynamation) will soon be finished.

Tales That Witness Madness is a Paramount Picture due for release in the summer of this year. Based on the *Tales From The Crypt* idea, the picture will center around four separate stories. Rita Hayworth was the leading lady, but had to be replaced by Kim Novak after a good part of the picture was already in the can. Other cast members include Georgia Brown, George Collins, Jack Hawk-


MILLIONS SING PRAISES OF SPACE OPERA "1 AND THE PEACELORD OF THE UNIVERSE
PERRY RHODAN
24
INFINITY FLIGHT
by Clark Darlton

ins, Donald Houston, Michael Jayston, Suzie Kendall, Peter McEnery and Donald Pleasance. It is from a script written by Jay Fairbanks.

Also from Paramount is *Phase IV*, an original science fiction screenplay by Mayo Simon (author of *Maroon-ed*) about ants taking over the world. Paramount will also be distributing the Hanna-Barbera-Saggitarius production of E. B. White's famous children's book *Charlotte's Web*. The voices will be provided by Henry Gibson (Wilbur the Pig), Paul Lynde (Templeton the Rat), Agnes Moorehead (The Old Goose), Debbie Reynolds (Charlotte the Spider), Dave Madden (The Old Sheep) and Rex Allen as the narrator. It should debut just prior to Easter at the Radio City Music Hall.

The Godfather (part II) is scheduled to be released on March 27, 1974 at Loews Showcase Theaters in New York City, picking up where the first film left off and starring Al Pacino as Michael Corleone.

Twentieth Century Fox is also dabbling in the horror vein, working on *Legend of Hell House* starring Roddy McDowell, Pamela Franklin, Barbara Parkins, Clive Revill and Gale Hunnicutt. John Hough directs from a script by Richard Matheson, the well known science fiction writer.

A third Shaft film is now in production. *Shaft in Africa*, starring Richard Roundtree, produced by Roger Lewis, directed by John Guillerman, from a script by Stirling Silliphant is just the beginning of what seems to be an avalanche of 'Shaft' offshoots. There will in all probability be a Shaft television series starring Roundtree in the 1973 season. Novelist, TV screenwriter, and golden age artist, Don Rico, has submitted a Shaft daily strip to newspaper syndicates for consideration. More on this in an upcoming *Comixscene*.

MGM also has a pair of science fiction movies in production, *Soylent Green* is about overpopulation, New York City in 2022 and government rationing of synthetic food. The all-star cast included Charlton Heston, the late Edward G. Robinson, Joseph Cotten, Chuck Connors and Leigh Taylor-Young. Screenplay is by Stanley Greenberg, direction by Richard Sleischer, and the producers are Walter Seltzer and Russell Thacher. The other picture is *Westworld*, a story of robots that malfunction and become western-style gunfighters. Script and direction by Michael (The Andromeda Strain) Crichton and the producer will be Paul Lazarus.

Production has begun on "The Stranger," a two-hour science fiction drama being developed as a possible series for the NBC network by Bing Crosby Productions. Glenn Corbett, Sharon Acker, Cameron Mitchell, Lew Ayres and Dean Jagger have been set for the leading roles by executive producer Andrew J. Fenady. Corbett will portray an American astronaut whose space ship crashes on a twin planet of the earth. There he becomes a fugitive of the socialistic power structure which views his ideas of individualism as a threat to their way of life. Mitchell, Acker, Jagger and Ayres will play members of a controlled society known as the Perfect Order. Alan Armer is the producer, Gerald Sanford is the writer and co-producer, and Lee H. Katzin is the director. The drama is being filmed at Paramount Studios and at various locations in Los Angeles.

"Dracula is Dead and Well and Living in London," Hammer Production's new entry has begun filming in England with Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing in the starring roles of Count Dracula and Van Helsing. Also starring are William

Franklyn, Michael Coles, Joanna Lumley and Freddie Jones. The picture is being produced by Roy Skeggs and directed by Alan Gibson from an original screenplay by Don Houghton, who also functions as associate producer. The picture tells the story of Dracula and his adventures into the sinister world of super spies and secret agents as he seeks revenge on unsuspecting mankind. This is the seventh Hammer-Lee motion picture on Dracula, beginning with *Horror of Dracula* back in 1956.

Fritz, the Cat, the first X-rated animated cartoon has grossed in excess of $10 million according to producer Steve Krantz and Jerry Gross, head of Cinemation Industries which released the Fritz cartoon. Krantz, who heads his own production firm, is preparing a sequel, tentatively titled "The Nine Lives of Fritz the Cat." Allen Manning is toiling over the script in which "Fritz goes through a series of reincarnations, taking him backward and forward in time, so he meets such characters as Al Capone, Hitler and is at the St. Valentine's Day Massacre." The only catch is in the newest Robert Crumb underground, *People's Comics*, creator Crumb neatly kills Fritz off.

United Artists' new James Bond, Roger Moore, gets to destroy 13 outboard engine motorboats, 13 aquajets, 88 crocodiles, a double-decker London bus, a 120-foot yacht and eight airplanes in the new 007 release, *Live and Let Die*. Director Guy Hamilton, who directed *Goldfinger* and the recent *Diamonds Are Forever*, is also scheduled to direct the next Bond epic, *The Man With The Golden Gun*. Co-starring in *Live and Let Die* are Jane Seymour, Yaphet Kotto as Dr. Kananga, David (Capt. Crane) Hedison, and Geoffrey Holder as Baron Samedi. Dr.

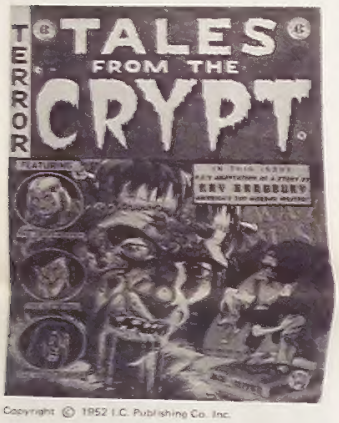
Kananga is the Prime Minister of a Caribbean Island nation and head of a massive drug ring based in Jamaica. The good doctor plans to destroy the western countries through voodoo and Baron Samedi's voodoo cult. Paul McCartney and his band Wings will score the title tune for the movie.

United Artists is also working on *Theatre of Blood* starring Vincent Price, Dianna Rigg, Harry Andrews, Jack Hawkins, Robert Morley, Diana Dors, Milo O'Shea and Eric Sykes. The picture is produced by John Kohn and Stanley Mann, directed by Douglas Hickox from a script by Anthony Greville-Bell. A new Woody Allen flick is also in the works.

George Pal is still searching for the perfect actor to portray Doc Savage in his upcoming film based on the Man of Bronze. Bill Smith, of TV's "Laredo" series is being considered for the part, but the rumor of Chuck Connors in the title role continues to persist. Pal has said he is using the Steranko portrait of Doc and the crew from the centerspread of *COMIXSCENE 1* as a guide for his casting.

HORROR COMICS OF THE FIFTIES

It's an accepted fact in sociology that the various forms of popular media like newspapers, radio, films, and comic books often are more accurate reflections and indicators of society than any amount of scholarly analysis.



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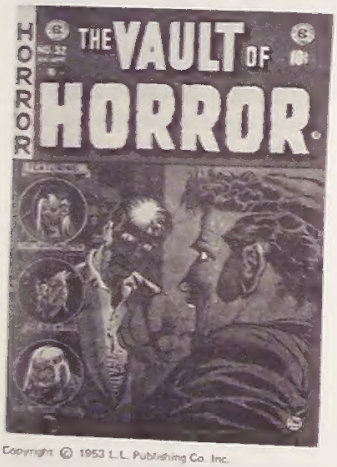

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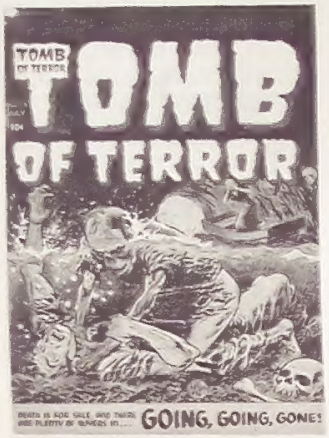
As we all know, horror comics blossomed and flourished in the first half of the decade of the 1950's, and in fact became the dominant trend in comics for that period. What can this trend tell us about the period 1950-1954 that gave them birth?

The first question might be—what were horror stories doing in comic books at all? At that particular period, comic books were the only media treating the subject. All others seemed to shun monsters altogether. Part of the explanation lies in the position comics had in the holy order of the media that determines their status. At the top of the hierarchy are the respected elite arts of painting, sculpture, and literature; and on the bottom are the popular pastimes of pulps, grade B movies, commercial art, and all comic art. The significance of this order is that the society uses the media on the top to express its highest ideals and aspirations, and the low men on the totem pole to express its worst fears, fantasies, and subversive tendencies—the skeletons in the closet, so to speak.



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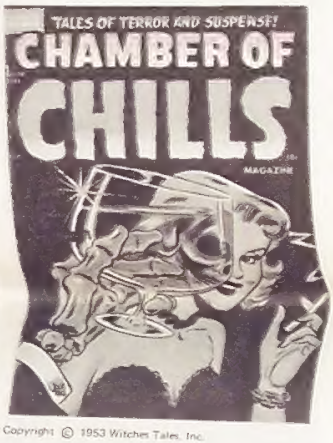
Now in the first years of the 1950's, an ideal lifestyle was projected to the American public. It presented a new utopia of material wealth that all were expected to join and follow patriotically. This new Good Life was to include clean cut fathers and mothers, their hands resting on a new Frigidaire, or out with their two kids for a Sunday drive in their new luxury sedan.

There was a ranch style home for every family—a dishwasher in every kitchen—and two cars in every garage. All that was asked of you to enjoy all this was to follow the crowd: land a good job, work your way upwards, by thrift, long hours and hard work, get into management, then sit back and watch the money roll in until it's time for retirement, and you can really enjoy all that leisure time. So how was the grisly intensity of the horror books related to all this?

Many are too young to remember clearly, but not only was that image of perfection the standard forward-looking ideal at the time—it was the only ideal offered. Totalitarian conformity—"Conform or get out." Not so obvious as the material well-being offered in the ads was the fact that the ideal left no room for mistakes, funkiness, or individual deviation. It was an ideal cleansed of emotion and there were no alternatives offered.

As the most effective tool for conveying this ideal, the entire advertising business was mobilized to project this ideal into the minds of America. The ad art and copy of 1950-1954 present a uniform vision of the rosy times to be had by following the crowd. Just as loud as the commands to: "Step up to higher pay." "See the U.S.A. in your Chevrolet." "Why go half way?" "Try this one on for size!," were the inner voices of the consumer that asked: "what about failure, what if we can't get a good job?" "Who says this will be the best of all possible worlds?" Will what we have to sacrifice to attain this state, make us into gods or monsters?" and "How will this euphoria be preserved? What happens if the whole system collapses?" The comics, being the anchor man of the media, spoke to these deeply felt anxieties and reflected visions of catastrophe.



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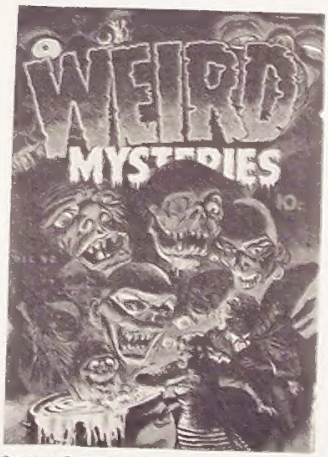

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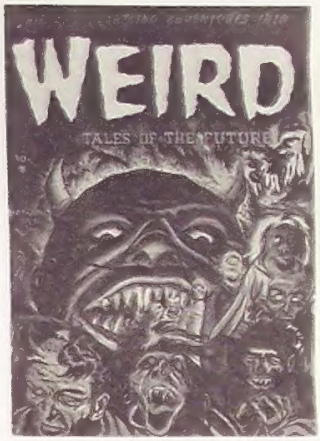
To say that the horror stories present no other thematic substance than the bad guys get their just deserts in the end merely points at the top layer of many tales typical of the time. For instance, one Stan Lee/Russ Heath tale that leads off *Journey Into Mystery* 2, from 1952, titled "Scarecrow", employs a standard fantasy common in all popular media up to that time. It's the story of a skinny guy who wants to be big and strong. But in contrast to super hero fantasies based in large part on the same fantasy (Billy Batson into Captain Marvel, et al), the outcome is disasterous. The 98 lb. weakling in the story makes his living appearing in ads for a health-building concern just like the Charles Atlas ads. Not surprisingly, the rest of the time he is bullied and pushed around by stronger, more brawny, more masculine men.



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Naturally the squirt wants to be big and strong too, but—"I take tonic, pills, exercise . . . even Vigomin! Nothing helps! Other guys goose pimples are bigger than my muscles! "After being turned down flat for a date for the umpteenth time, he decides, in his dispair to take a gamble on a bottle of "power potion" offered to him by the queer little owner of a queer little shop. The owner warns him that though the potion is cheap, the antidote is expensive. Ignoring this, the little man downs the potion and in the next panel is blessed with bulging muscles and the heroic physique of a Charles Atlas; just like Captain America.

Not wasting a minute, he parades around town as women sigh at him, goes on a spree of picking fistfights

and winning them, shaming lifeguards, forcing girls to date him, and generally boosting his ego. In the end, he finds out in a hurry that he has been gaining mass as well as muscles. Unable to buy the antidote in time, his weight increases until he falls through the floor and sinks to the center of the earth.

On the first level, the moral reads: "self indulgence leads to self destruction—pride goeth before a fall". But implicit in the simple manipulating of stereotypes is criticism of a cherished American dream. We can all identify with the little guy as feeling anxious that the standard of masculine beauty projected in ads, is beyond his reach. However, the first part of the story is a success story; magically, he gets his wish. Now if this were a super hero story of just a few years before, he would jump out the window, fight crime like the Black Terror, and be a champion of decency, democracy, and freedom. But instead, his attainment of

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Godhood comes with a fatal flaw that ends in his violent destruction. The vague fears, that all wasn't necessarily well if one exercised hard to look like Charles Atlas—or joined the Army because the Army builds men—that many readers must have felt, are given a crude voice in this story.

An old Stan Lee/Joe Maneely story reprinted in Marvel's new *Journey Into Mystery* 3 titled "Genius," chronicles the tale of a talking baby prone to meteoric upward mobility. He quickly outtalks his parents, best psychologists, and graduates from college. When asked —"What are your plans now that you've graduated college?" he replies—"Typical, normal, everyday plans . . . marriage, a home, a fortune!" By age 20, he is the richest man on earth and bored silly. He dabbles in crime and perfect murders as he begins to— " . . . take pleasure in tormenting his fellow men . . . because to him they were less than human . . . just playthings to amuse him!" Finally, the mental genius receives a telepathic image

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of a beautiful girl from Venus—"This was what you had dreamed of!! A girl whose brain was as advanced as yours . . . A ravishing beauty who could appreciate your brilliance . . . and a lovely new world . . ." But then—"Just wait till I remove my mask . . ." "Your *what*!" Under the lifelike mask, the girl is a hideous, wrinkled hag, her brain out-growing her head. The genius takes one last look back at Earth, and jumps off a cliff. The last caption ends: "For a genius, Gerald, you were pretty dumb, weren't you?" This fantasy debunks a number of cherished ideals of the time. The ideal of upward mobility, the stress parents put on their kids to be early achievers in the competitive school system, the idea of money and happiness, and the notion of every boy finding the girl who is his perfect match are all parodied into asburdity. The tip off that this is not just a spoof and less than good-natured joking is implied by the unmasking of the beautiful girl, revealing a hideous hag. She gives the whole story a sour flavor.

This second story is a variation of what seems to me to be the archetypical horror story motif. It was used everywhere and was a favorite at EC. A man in business for himself, or employed in a large corporation, follows the party line of hard work and long hours, single-mindedly sacrificing family, friends and lovers for the sake of his job. He advances himself to a secure position, often taking advantage of others when expedient to his ends.

But, instead of amassing a fortune, being able to afford all those luxuries, and having the leisure time to enjoy them he is poisoned by the business ethics he follows. He becomes a cruel, vicious man who sees the world through a keyhole, and whose only credo is kill or be killed. His plans for wealth and comfort and escape return disastrously, destroying himself and all that he loved. The appearance of ghouls,

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witches, vampires, werewolves and other stock character monsters are in fact always brought about by the designs of the equally monstrous humans that populate the rest of the story.

This is the real compelling truth behind the art of Graham Ingels and Basil Wolverton. These two artists epitomize the horror art of the 1950's better than any other men. Everyone in their strips, without exception, from little child to honest young man, from budding starlet to kindly old man, is thoroughly tainted with the atmosphere of horror. Besides their frequent mental and physical handicaps, they all wear the scars of the awful ravages of lust, greed, fear, and hatred they have borne their entire lives. No doubt, to these two artists, these feelings were in no small way aggravated and intensified by the rigors of trying to keep up with the party line in America and its gadfly, advertising.

This can help explain why artists, every bit as sensitive and talented as Ingels and Wolverton, like Crandall, Evans, Davis, Kamen, Wood, Powell,

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and Toth, who could have easily made it big in advertising, drawing Chevies, were working in horror comics. There was just no place for those feelings in ad art. Everything had to be rosy and clean. These artists, and the rest, were the underground of their time, translating our doubts and fears into the visceral language of the comic books.

What about the current strong revival of horror in comics today? Does this mean that another rejection of the prevailing value system is taking place? More than likely—yes. If you aren't already participating in one of the various phases of the counter culture, it's sure been hard to pick up a magazine or watch TV in the past five years without getting a report on flower children, motorcycle gangs, Abbie Hoffman's guerilla theatre tactics, rural communal living. Sure seems like a strong indication of something, doesn't it?

—Tom Greenslade

This issue of Comixscene showcases the faces of fear from the thrilling thirties to the scary seventies! Werewolves, monsters, vampires, ghouls, zombies, the unliving and the undead—the horror characters and comics of yesterday, today and tomorrow all wait to greet you on the pages inside! Plus: more news, reviews and articles than ever before. Special feature: FROGS! A nightmarish parable told in an exciting, new comic format! Steranko creates his first story in three years—a way-out experiment in form and content equal to an 8-page comic story! Enjoy! Enjoy!!

HORROR!

COMIXSCENE PREVIEW: A trio of covers from Marvel's upcoming monster mags—MONSTERS UNLEASHED by Morrow, VAMPIRE TALES by Moroto, TALES OF THE ZOMBIE by Vallejo.

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